

NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP

Form S-3

April 27, 2005

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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 26, 2005

Registration No. 333-

UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, DC 20549

FORM S-3

REGISTRATION STATEMENT

UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Its Charter)

Maryland
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

56-2451736
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

18400 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 1000

Irvine, California 92612

(949) 440-7030

(Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Registrant's Principal Executive Offices)

Brad A. Morrice

President and Chief Operating Officer

New Century Financial Corporation

18400 Von Karman, Suite 1000

Irvine, California 92612

(949) 440-7030

Copies to:

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275 Battery Street, 26th Floor

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San Francisco, California 94111

(415) 984-8700

(Name, Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Agent For Service)

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after the effective date of this registration statement.

If the only securities being registered on this form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box. "

If any of the securities being registered on this form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box. x

If this form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. "

If this form is a post effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. "

If delivery of the prospectus is expected to be made pursuant to Rule 434, please check the following box. "

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities To Be Registered	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(1)	Amount Of Registration Fee(2)
Common Stock, par value \$0.01 per share(3)		
Preferred Stock, par value \$0.01 per shares(4)		
Depository Shares(4)		
Debt Securities(5)		
Warrants(6)		
Total	\$1,000,000,000.00(7)	\$117,700.00

- (1) The proposed maximum aggregate offering price per class of security will be determined from time to time by the registrant in connection with the issuance by the registrant of the securities registered hereunder and is not specified as to each class of security pursuant to General Instruction II.D. of Form S-3 under the Securities Act.
- (2) Calculated pursuant to Rule 457(o) of the Securities Act. Pursuant to Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act and General Instruction II.D to Form S-3, the table does not specify by each class information as to the amount to be registered, proposed maximum offering price per unit or proposed maximum aggregate offering price.
- (3) Subject to note 7 below, an indeterminable number of shares of common stock of the registrant, as may be sold from time to time, are being registered hereunder by the registrant. Pursuant to Rule 416 under the Securities Act, the shares being registered hereunder include such indeterminate number of shares of common stock as may be issuable with respect to the shares being registered hereunder as a result of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions. Pursuant to Rule 457(i) under the Securities Act, the shares being registered hereunder include such indeterminate number of shares of common stock as may be issuable upon conversion or exchange of any preferred stock, warrants or debt securities issued under this registration statement.
- (4) Subject to note 7 below, an indeterminable number of shares of preferred stock of the registrant and depository shares representing a fractional interest in a share of preferred stock, as may be sold from time to time, are being registered hereunder by the registrant. In the event the registrant elects to offer to the public fractional interests in shares of the preferred stock registered hereunder, depository receipts will be distributed to those persons acquiring such fractional interests and the shares of preferred stock will be issued to a depository under a deposit agreement. Pursuant to Rule 416 under the Securities Act, the shares being registered hereunder include such indeterminate number of preferred stock as may be issuable with respect to the shares being registered hereunder as a result of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions. Pursuant to Rule 457(i) under the Securities Act, the shares being registered hereunder include such indeterminable number of shares of preferred stock as may be issuable upon conversion or exchange of any warrants or debt securities issued under this registration statement.
- (5) Subject to note 7 below, an indeterminable principal amount of debt securities, as may be sold from time to time, are being registered hereunder by the registrant. If any debt securities are issued at an original issue discount, then the offering price shall be in such greater principal amount at maturity as shall result in aggregate gross proceeds to the registrant not to exceed \$1 billion, less the gross proceeds attributable to any securities previously issued pursuant to this registration statement. Pursuant to Rule 457(i) under the Securities Act, the debt securities being registered hereunder include such indeterminate principal amount of debt securities as may be issuable upon conversion or exchange of any warrants issued under this registration statement.
- (6) Subject to note 7 below, an indeterminable number of warrants representing rights to purchase common stock, preferred stock or debt securities of one or more series are being registered hereunder by the registrant.
- (7) In no event will the aggregate offering price of all securities issued from time to time pursuant to this registration statement exceed \$1 billion, excluding accrued interest, if any, on any debt securities issued under this registration statement. The securities registered hereunder may be sold separately or as units with other securities registered hereunder.

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The registrant hereby amends this registration statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the registrant shall file a further amendment which specifically states that this registration statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act or until the registration statement shall become effective on such date as the Securities and Exchange Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

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The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. The registration statement relating to these securities has been filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission and has become effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and we are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED APRIL 26, 2005

PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS

\$1,000,000,000

Common Stock

Preferred Stock

Depositary Shares

Debt Securities

Warrants

We may offer and sell an indeterminate number of shares of our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities and warrants from time to time under this prospectus.

We may offer these securities separately or as units, which may include combinations of the securities. We will describe in a prospectus supplement, which must accompany this prospectus, the securities we are offering and selling, as well as the specifications of the securities.

We may offer these securities in amounts, at prices and on terms determined at the time of offering. We may sell the securities directly to you, through agents we select, or through underwriters and dealers we select. If we use agents, underwriters or dealers to sell the securities, we will name them and describe their compensation in a prospectus supplement.

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Our common stock is subject to transfer restrictions designed to preserve our status as a real estate investment trust, or REIT. See Description of Capital Stock Transfer Restrictions.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, or NYSE, under the symbol NEW.

This prospectus may not be used to offer or sell any securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

Investing in our common stock involves risks. See Risk Factors beginning on page 5.

We may sell the securities to or through underwriters or dealers, directly to purchasers or through agents designated from time to time. For additional information on the methods of sale, you should refer to the section entitled Plan of Distribution in this prospectus. If any underwriters are involved in the sale of any securities with respect to which this prospectus is being delivered, the names of such underwriters and any applicable discounts or commissions and over-allotment options will be set forth in a prospectus supplement. The price to the public of such securities and the net proceeds we expect to receive from such sale will also be set forth in a prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is April , 2005.

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You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference into this document. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information that is different. This document may be used only where it is legal to sell these securities. This document is not an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy, in any state where the offer or sale is prohibited. The information in this document is accurate on the date of this document and may become obsolete later. Neither the delivery of this document, nor any sale made under this document will, under any circumstances, imply that the information in this document is correct as of any date after the date of this prospectus. Unless the context suggests otherwise, the terms New Century, our company, ourselves, we, our and us to New Century Financial Corporation and its subsidiaries, including its wholly-owned subsidiary, New Century TRS. New Century TRS refers to New Century TRS Holdings, Inc., one of our wholly-owned taxable REIT subsidiaries, and its subsidiaries, except where the context suggests otherwise.

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We have registered trademarks for FastQua®, New Century Mortgage and Home 123 and we have a registered service mark for the New Century logo. All other brand names or trademarks appearing in this prospectus are the property of their respective holders.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a shelf registration process. Under the shelf registration process, we may sell our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or warrants in one or more offerings up to an aggregate dollar amount of \$1 billion. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell any securities under this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain more specific information about the terms of those securities. We may also add, update or change in a prospectus supplement any of the information contained in this prospectus or in documents we have incorporated by reference into this prospectus. This prospectus, together with the applicable prospectus supplements and the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus and the prospectus supplement, includes the material information relating to this offering. You should carefully read both this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement together with the additional information described under [Where You Can Find Additional Information About New Century](#) before buying securities in this offering.

We may sell the securities to or through underwriters, dealers or agents or directly to purchasers. We and our agents reserve the sole right to accept and to reject in whole or in part any proposed purchase of securities. A prospectus supplement, which we will provide to you each time we offer securities, will provide the names of any underwriters, dealers, or agents involved in the sale of the securities, and any applicable fee, commission or discount arrangements with them.

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SUMMARY

This summary contains basic information about us and this prospectus and the information incorporated by reference in this prospectus. Because it is a summary, it does not contain all of the information that you should consider before investing. You should read this entire prospectus and the other documents which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus carefully, including the section titled "Risk Factors" and our financial statements and the notes thereto, before making an investment in our securities.

NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Our Business

We are a real estate investment trust, or REIT, that, through our subsidiaries, operates one of the nation's largest subprime mortgage finance companies. We began operating our business as a REIT in the fourth quarter of 2004, and we will elect to be taxed as a REIT when we file our tax returns for 2004. In connection with our REIT conversion, we raised approximately \$770 million of capital, net of underwriting and other expenses, in October 2004. We continue to deploy that capital to build a portfolio of mortgage assets and expect to have fully deployed that capital by the end of the second quarter of 2005. We expect that our portfolio of mortgage assets will provide a relatively stable source of revenues and will contribute more than half of our earnings in 2005.

We originate and purchase primarily first mortgage products nationwide. We focus on lending to individuals whose borrowing needs are generally not fulfilled by traditional financial institutions because they do not satisfy the credit, documentation or other underwriting standards prescribed by conventional mortgage lenders and loan buyers. We originate and purchase loans on the basis of the borrower's ability to repay the mortgage loan, the borrower's historical pattern of debt repayment and the amount of equity in the borrower's property, as measured by the borrower's loan-to-value ratio, or LTV. We have been originating and purchasing subprime loans since 1996 and believe we have developed a comprehensive and sophisticated process of credit evaluation and risk-based pricing that allows us to effectively manage the potentially higher credit risks associated with this segment of the mortgage industry.

We have historically sold our loans through both whole loan sales and securitizations. Until 2003, we typically structured these securitizations as sales. Since 2003, we have retained between 20% and 25% per year of our loan production for investment on our balance sheet through securitizations structured as financings rather than sales. We converted to a REIT in 2004 because we believe that the REIT structure provides the most tax-efficient way to hold mortgage loans on our balance sheet. We expect that we will continue to increase the percentage of our net income generated from our mortgage loan portfolio, producing more diverse revenues across a variety of interest rate environments.

We are a Maryland corporation formed on April 12, 2004 to continue the business of New Century TRS. Since October 1, 2004, shares of New Century common stock have been listed on the NYSE under the symbol NEW. Our principal executive offices are located at 18400 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 1000, Irvine, California 92612, our telephone number at that location is (949) 440-7030 and our Web site is www.ncen.com. Information contained on our Web site does not constitute a part of this prospectus.

The Securities We May Offer

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We may offer shares of our common stock and preferred stock, depositary shares, various series of debt securities and warrants to purchase any of such securities and any combination of such securities with a total value of up to \$1 billion from time to time under this prospectus at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of offering. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the

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securities we may offer. Each time we offer a type or series of securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will describe the specific amounts, prices and other important terms of the securities, including, to the extent applicable:

designation or classification;

aggregate principal amount or aggregate offering price;

maturity;

original issue discount, if any;

rates and times of payment of interest, dividends or other payments, if any;

redemption, conversion, exchange, settlement or sinking fund terms, if any;

conversion, exchange or settlement prices or rates, if any, and, if applicable, any provisions for changes to or adjustments in the conversion, exchange or settlement prices or rates and in the securities or other property receivable upon conversion, exchange or settlement;

ranking;

restrictive covenants, if any;

voting or other rights, if any; and

important federal income tax considerations.

The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus or in documents we have incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

This prospectus may not be used to offer or sell any securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

We may sell the securities directly to or through underwriters, dealers or agents or directly to purchasers. We, and our underwriters or agents, reserve the sole right to accept or reject all or part of any proposed purchase of securities. If we do offer securities through underwriters or agents, we will include in the applicable prospectus supplement:

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the names of those underwriters, dealers or agents;

applicable fees, discounts and commissions to be paid to them;

details regarding over-allotment options, if any; and

the net proceeds to us.

Common Stock

We may issue shares of our common stock from time to time. Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote per share for the election of directors and on all other matters that require stockholder approval. Subject to any preferential rights of any outstanding preferred stock, in the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, holders of our common stock are entitled to share ratably in the assets remaining after payment of liabilities and the liquidation preferences of any outstanding preferred stock. Our common stock does not carry any preemptive rights enabling a holder to subscribe for, or receive shares of, any class of our common stock or any other securities convertible into shares of any class of our common stock, or any redemption rights. Our common stock is subject to transfer restrictions designed to preserve our status as a REIT. See Description of Capital Stock Transfer Restrictions.

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Preferred Stock

We may issue shares of our preferred stock from time to time in one or more series. Our charter authorizes our board of directors to classify any unissued shares of preferred stock and to reclassify any previously classified but unissued shares of any series of preferred stock. Prior to issuance of shares of each class or series of preferred stock, our board of directors is required by the Maryland General Corporation Law, or the MGCL, and our charter to fix the terms, preferences, conversion or other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends or other distributions, qualifications and terms or conditions of redemption for each such class or series.

We will fix the rights, preferences, privileges, qualifications and restrictions of the preferred stock of each series that we sell under this prospectus and applicable prospectus supplements in the articles supplementary relating to that series. We will incorporate by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part the form of any articles supplementary that describes the terms of the series of preferred stock we are offering. We urge you to read the prospectus supplements related to the series of preferred stock being offered, as well as the complete articles supplementary that contains the terms of the applicable series of preferred stock.

Depositary Shares

We may elect to offer fractional shares of preferred stock rather than full shares of preferred stock and, in that event, will issue receipts for depositary shares. Each of these depositary shares will represent a fraction, which will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, of a share of the applicable series of preferred stock.

Any depositary shares that we sell under this prospectus will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued under a deposit agreement between us and a depositary with whom we deposit the shares of the applicable series of preferred stock that underlie the depositary shares that are sold. A deposit agreement, including a depositary receipt, for any depositary shares that we sell under this prospectus will be incorporated by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We urge you to read the prospectus supplements related to any depositary shares being sold, as well as the complete deposit agreement and depositary receipt.

Debt Securities

We may issue debt securities from time to time, in one or more series, as either senior or subordinated debt or as senior or subordinated convertible debt. The senior debt securities will rank equally with any other unsubordinated debt that we may have and may be secured or unsecured. The subordinated debt securities will be subordinate and junior in right of payment, to the extent and in the manner described in the instrument governing the debt, to all or some portion of our indebtedness. Any convertible debt securities that we issue will be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or other securities of ours. Conversion may be mandatory or at your option and would be at prescribed conversion rates.

The debt securities will be issued under one or more documents called indentures, which are contracts between us and a trustee for the holders of the debt securities. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the debt securities. We urge you, however, to read the prospectus supplements related to the series of debt securities being offered, as well as the complete indentures that contain the terms of the debt securities. Indentures have been filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and supplemental indentures and forms of debt securities containing the terms of debt securities being offered will be incorporated by reference into the registration statement of

which this prospectus is a part.

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We may issue warrants for the purchase of shares of our common stock, our preferred stock, our depositary shares and/or our debt securities in one or more series, from time to time. We may issue warrants independently or together with our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares and/or debt securities, and the warrants may be attached to, or separate from, those securities.

The warrants will be evidenced by warrant certificates issued under one or more warrant agreements, which are contracts between us and an agent for the holders of the warrants. In this prospectus, we have summarized certain general features of the warrants. We urge you, however, to read the prospectus supplements related to the series of warrants being offered, as well as the complete warrant agreements and warrant certificates that contain the terms of the warrants. Complete warrant agreements and warrant certificates containing the terms of the warrants being offered will be incorporated by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

Financial Ratios

The following table sets forth our consolidated ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the periods shown:

	Years Ended December 31,				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges(1)	0.54	2.39	6.50	4.43	2.63
Ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends	0.52	2.28	6.45	4.43	2.63

- (1) Deficiency in the year 2000 for the ratio of earnings to fixed charges and the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends is \$36,781,000 and \$39,681,000, respectively.

The ratios of earnings to fixed charges were computed by dividing earnings by fixed charges. The ratios of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends were computed by dividing earnings as adjusted by fixed charges and preferred stock dividends. The ratios for periods prior to October 1, 2004 include the historical amounts of New Century TRS. For this purpose, earnings consist of (a) pre-tax income (loss) from continuing operations before adjustment for minority interests in consolidated subsidiaries or income or loss from equity investees plus (b) fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest expense and that portion of rental expense considered to be a reasonable estimate of the interest factor.

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RISK FACTORS

You should carefully consider the risks described below before making an investment decision. Any of these risks could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects. This prospectus and the documents incorporated herein by reference also contain forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Our actual results could differ materially from those anticipated in these forward-looking statements as a result of certain factors, including the risks faced by us described below and elsewhere in this prospectus and in documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus. The trading price of our common stock could decline due to any of these risks, and you may lose all or part of your investment.

RISKS RELATED TO OUR BUSINESS

We are dependent on external sources of financing, and if we are unable to maintain adequate financing sources, our earnings and our financial position will suffer and jeopardize our ability to continue operations.

Our ability to make payments on indebtedness and to refinance indebtedness when necessary will depend on our financial and operating performance, each of which is subject to prevailing economic conditions and to financial, business, legislative and regulatory factors and other factors beyond our control.

To qualify as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code, or the Code, we generally are required each year to distribute to our stockholders at least 90% of our REIT taxable income (determined without regard to the dividends paid deduction and by excluding net capital gains). After-tax earnings generated by our taxable REIT subsidiaries and not distributed to us are not subject to these distribution requirements and may be retained by such subsidiaries to provide for future growth, subject to the limitations imposed by REIT tax rules. We conduct a substantial amount of our business through our taxable REIT subsidiaries. We cannot be certain that we will have access to funds to meet the REIT distribution and other qualification requirements. We may be required to borrow funds from one of our corporate subsidiaries or a third party on a short-term basis or liquidate investments to meet the distribution requirements that are necessary to qualify as a REIT, even if management believes that it is not in our best interests to do so. If we do not have access to the necessary funds, we may have to raise capital at inopportune times or borrow funds on unfavorable terms.

In addition, we require substantial cash to support our operating activities and growth plans in our taxable REIT subsidiaries. As part of our growth plan, we intend to obtain financing by accessing the capital markets. Our primary sources of cash for our loan origination activities are our warehouse and aggregation credit facilities, our asset-backed commercial paper facility and the proceeds from the sales and securitizations of our loans. From time to time, we finance our residual interests in securitization transactions through the sale of net interest margin securities, or NIMS; however, we have not recently relied on NIMS financing as much as we have in prior years. As of December 31, 2004, we had 11 short-term warehouse and aggregation credit facilities and our asset-backed commercial paper facility that provided us with approximately \$10.2 billion of committed and \$1.9 billion of uncommitted borrowing capacity to fund loan originations and purchases pending the pooling and sale of such loans. If we cannot maintain or replace these facilities on comparable terms and conditions, we may incur substantially higher interest expense that would reduce our profitability.

During volatile times in the capital and secondary markets, access to warehouse, aggregation and residual financing as well as access to the securitization and secondary markets for the sale of our loans has been severely constricted. Subject to the limitations imposed by REIT tax rules, our taxable REIT subsidiaries are permitted to retain the after-tax income they generate. We may, at some point in the future, borrow funds from one or more of our corporate subsidiaries upon terms that are similar to those that a third-party lender would require, or actually

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obtain a third-party loan for some portion of the required financing amount and then replicate the third-party loan terms in the intercompany borrowing. However, if we are unable to maintain adequate financing or other sources of capital are not available, we would be forced to suspend or curtail our operations, which would harm our

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results of operations, financial condition and business prospects. Similarly, we may be required to pursue one or more alternative strategies, such as selling assets, refinancing or restructuring our indebtedness or selling additional debt or equity securities.

We face intense competition that could harm our market share and our revenues.

We face intense competition from finance and mortgage banking companies and from Internet-based lending companies. In addition, certain government-sponsored entities, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, are also expanding their participation in the subprime mortgage industry. These government-sponsored entities have a size and cost-of-funds advantage that allows them to purchase loans with lower rates or fees than we are willing to offer. While the government-sponsored entities presently do not have the legal authority to originate mortgage loans, including subprime loans, they do have the authority to buy loans. A material expansion of their involvement in the market to purchase subprime loans could change the dynamics of the industry by virtue of their sheer size, pricing power and the inherent advantages of a government charter. In addition, if as a result of their purchasing practices, these government-sponsored entities experience significantly higher-than-expected losses, such experience could harm the overall investor perception of the subprime mortgage industry.

Certain large finance companies and conforming mortgage originators also originate subprime mortgage loans to customers similar to the borrowers we serve. Competitors with lower costs of capital have a competitive advantage over us. In addition, establishing a wholesale lending operation such as ours requires a relatively small commitment of capital and human resources. This low barrier to entry permits new competitors to enter our markets quickly and compete with our wholesale lending business. If these competitors are able to attract some of our key employees and disrupt our broker relationships, it could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Some thrifts, national banks and their operating subsidiaries are also expanding their subprime mortgage lending activities. By virtue of their charters, these institutions are exempt from complying with many of the state and local laws that affect our operations. For example, they are permitted to offer loans with prepayment charges in many jurisdictions where we cannot. If more of these federally chartered institutions are able to use their preemptive ability to provide more competitive pricing and terms than we can offer, it could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects. We may also be forced to expand our operations at a pace that does not allow us to attract a sufficient number of employees with the capability to ensure we are in compliance with the numerous complex regulations applicable to our business as well as to enable us to provide high quality customer service and this could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

In addition, to the extent we purchase mortgage loans or mortgage-related assets from third parties, we will compete with other REITs, investment banking firms, savings and loan associations, banks, insurance companies, other lenders and other entities that purchase mortgage loans or mortgage-backed securities, many of which have greater financial resources than we do. As a result, we may not be able to acquire sufficient mortgage-related assets with favorable yields over our borrowing costs, which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

The intense competition in the subprime mortgage industry has also led to rapid technological developments, evolving industry standards and frequent releases of new products and enhancements. As mortgage products are offered more widely through alternative distribution channels, such as the Internet, we may be required to make significant changes to our current wholesale and retail structures and information systems to compete effectively. Our inability to continue enhancing our current Internet capabilities, or to adapt to other technological changes in the industry, could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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A prolonged economic slowdown or a lengthy or severe recession could harm our operations, particularly if it results in a decline in the real estate market.

The risks associated with our business are more acute during periods of economic slowdown or recession because these periods may be accompanied by decreased demand for consumer credit and declining real estate values. Declining real estate values reduce the ability of borrowers to use home equity to support borrowings because they reduce the LTV of the home equity collateral. In addition, because we make a substantial number of loans to credit-impaired borrowers, the actual rates of delinquencies, foreclosures and losses on these loans could be higher during economic slowdowns. Any sustained period of increased delinquencies, foreclosures or losses could harm our ability to sell loans, the prices we receive for our loans, or the values of our mortgage loans held for investment or our residual interests in securitizations, which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Our earnings may decrease because of increases or decreases in interest rates.

Our profitability may be directly affected by changes in interest rates. The following are some of the risks we face related to an increase in interest rates:

When we securitize loans, the value of the residual interests we retain and the income we receive from the securitizations structured as financings are based primarily on the London Inter-Bank Offered Rate, or LIBOR. This is because the interest on the underlying mortgage loans is based on fixed rates payable on the underlying loans for the first two or three years from origination while the holders of the applicable securities are generally paid based on an adjustable LIBOR-based yield. Therefore, an increase in LIBOR reduces the net income we receive from, and the value of, these mortgage loans and residual interests.

Our adjustable-rate mortgage loans have periodic and lifetime interest rate caps above which the interest rate on the loans may not rise. In the event of general interest rate increases, the rate of interest on these mortgage loans could be limited, while the rate payable on the senior certificates representing interests in a securitization trust into which these loans are sold may be uncapped. This would reduce the amount of cash we receive over the life of the loans in securitizations structured as financings and our residual interests, and could require us to reduce the carrying value of our residual interests.

An interest rate increase may harm our earnings by reducing the spread between the interest we receive on our mortgage loans and our funding costs.

A substantial and sustained increase in interest rates could harm our loan origination volume because refinancings of existing loans, including cash-out refinancings and interest rate-driven refinancings, would be less attractive and qualifying for a purchase loan may be more difficult. Lower origination volume may harm our earnings by reducing origination income, net interest income and gain on sale of loans.

During periods of rising interest rates, the value and profitability of our loans may be harmed between the date of origination or purchase and the date we sell or securitize the loans.

A substantial and sustained increase in interest rates could increase the delinquency and default rates on the adjustable-rate mortgage loans that we originate and hold because the borrowers' monthly payments under such loans may increase beyond the borrowers' ability to pay. High delinquencies or losses may decrease our cash flows or impair our ability to sell or securitize loans in the future, which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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We are also subject to risks from decreasing interest rates. For example, a significant decrease in interest rates could increase the rate at which loans are prepaid, which also could require us to reduce the carrying value of our residual interests. Moreover, if prepayments are greater than expected, the cash we receive over the life of our residual interests would be reduced. Higher-than-expected prepayments could also harm the value of our servicing portfolio. Therefore, any such changes in interest rates could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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Our reliance on cash-out refinancings as a significant source of our origination volume increases the risk that our earnings will be harmed if the demand for this type of refinancing declines.

During the year ended December 31, 2004, approximately 59.5% of our loan production volume consisted of cash-out refinancings. Our reliance on cash-out refinancings as a significant source of our origination volume increases the risk that our earnings will be reduced if interest rates rise and the prices of homes decline, which would reduce the demand and production volume for this type of refinancing. A substantial and sustained increase in interest rates could significantly reduce the number of borrowers who would qualify or elect to pursue a cash-out refinancing and result in a decline in that origination source. Similarly, a decrease in home prices would reduce the amount of equity available to be borrowed against in cash-out refinancings and result in a decrease in our loan production volume from that origination source. Therefore, our reliance on cash-out refinancings as a significant source of our origination volume could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

The loans we originate and hold are subprime, rather than prime, and generally have delinquency and default rates higher than prime loans, which could result in higher loan losses.

Subprime mortgage loans generally have higher delinquency and default rates than prime mortgage loans. Delinquency interrupts the flow of projected interest income from a mortgage loan, and default can ultimately lead to a loss if the net realizable value of the real property securing the mortgage loan is insufficient to cover the principal and interest due on the loan. Also, our cost of financing and servicing a delinquent or defaulted loan is generally higher than for a performing loan. We bear the risk of delinquency and default on loans beginning when we originate them. In whole loan sales, our risk of delinquency typically only extends to the first payment, but when we securitize any of our loans, we continue to be exposed to delinquencies and losses through our residual interests and the loans underlying our securitizations structured as financings. We are required to establish reserves based on our anticipated delinquencies and losses. We also re-acquire the risks of delinquency and default for loans that we are obligated to repurchase. We attempt to manage these risks with risk-based loan pricing and appropriate underwriting policies and loan collection methods. However, we cannot be certain that such management policies will be successful and, if such policies and methods are insufficient to control our delinquency and default risks and do not result in appropriate loan pricing and appropriate loss reserves, our business, financial condition, liquidity and results of operations could be harmed. As of December 31, 2004, the delinquency rate on mortgage loans that were 60 days or more past due and that we previously securitized in transactions structured as financings or sales was 3.00%. The expected cumulative loss rate on these loans as of December 31, 2004, was approximately 3.87% on mortgage loans underlying our residual interests in securitizations and serviced by others, and 2.59% on our mortgage loans held for investment, which we service on our own platform. The expected cumulative loss rate is determined as the historical cumulative loss rates of more aged loans plus the expected cumulative loss rates on newer loans that have experienced immaterial losses through December 31, 2004.

The geographic concentration of our mortgage loan originations increases our exposure to risks in those areas, especially California.

Over-concentration of our loan originations in any one geographic area increases our exposure to the economic and natural hazard risks associated with that area. For example, in the year ended December 31, 2004, approximately 41.1% of the aggregate principal amount of our mortgage loans were secured by property located in California. Certain parts of California have experienced an economic downturn in the past and have suffered the effects of certain natural hazards. Declines in the residential real estate markets in which we are concentrated may reduce the values of the properties collateralizing our mortgages, increase the risk of delinquency, foreclosure, bankruptcy, or losses and could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects. Furthermore, if borrowers are not insured for natural disasters, which are typically not covered by standard hazard insurance policies, then they may not be able to repair the property or may stop paying their mortgages if the property is damaged. A natural disaster that results in a significant number of delinquencies

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would cause increased foreclosures and decrease our ability to recover losses on properties affected by such disasters and would harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Likewise, the secondary market pricing for pools of loans that are not geographically diverse is typically less favorable than for a diverse pool. Our inability to originate or purchase geographically diverse pools of loans could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

An interruption or reduction in the securitization and whole loan markets would harm our financial position.

We are dependent on the securitization market for the sale of our loans because we securitize loans directly and many of our whole loan buyers purchase our loans with the intention to securitize them. The securitization market is dependent upon a number of factors, including general economic conditions, conditions in the securities market generally and conditions in the asset-backed securities market specifically. In addition, poor performance of our previously securitized loans could harm our access to the securitization market. Accordingly, a decline in the securitization market or a change in the market's demand for our loans could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

If we make any acquisitions, we will incur a variety of costs and may never realize the anticipated benefits.

If appropriate opportunities become available, we may attempt to acquire businesses that we believe are a strategic fit with our business. We currently have no agreements to consummate any material acquisitions. If we pursue any such transaction, the process of negotiating the acquisition and integrating an acquired business may result in operating difficulties and expenditures and may require significant management attention that would otherwise be available for ongoing development of our business, whether or not any such transaction is ever consummated. Moreover, we may never realize the anticipated benefits of any acquisition. Future acquisitions could result in potentially dilutive issuances of equity securities, the incurrence of debt, contingent liabilities and/or amortization expenses related to goodwill and other intangible assets, which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Our earnings from holding mortgage-backed securities or government securities may be harmed by changes in the level of interest rates, changes to the difference between short and longer term interest rates, changes to the difference between interest rates for these securities compared to other debt instruments, and an absence of or reduction in the availability, at favorable terms, of repurchase financing and other liquidity sources typically utilized by mortgage REITs.

From time to time, we may purchase mortgage-backed securities or government securities from third parties in order to comply with the income and asset tests necessary to maintain our REIT status. The value of, and return on, the mortgage-backed securities and government securities we hold will be affected by changes in the marketplace for such securities, as well as prepayment speeds in the case of mortgage-backed securities, and may be volatile and significantly different than projected. The securities that we hold may produce large losses instead of the income incorporated into our projections. The impact of changes in the marketplace for these securities on our results may be magnified because these holdings could be highly leveraged. Additionally, much of the financing we will use to hold these securities may be cancelable by our lenders on short notice. If our lenders cease providing financing to us on favorable terms, we would be forced to liquidate some or all of these securities, possibly at a substantial loss, which could harm our financial condition, results of operations and business prospects.

A material difference between the assumptions used in the determination of the value of our residual interests and our actual experience could harm our financial position.

As of December 31, 2004, the value on our balance sheet of our residual interests from securitization transactions was \$148.0 million. The value of these residuals is a function of the delinquency, loss, prepayment

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speed and discount rate assumptions we use. It is extremely difficult to validate the assumptions we use in valuing our residual interests. In the future, if our actual experience differs materially from these assumptions, our cash flow, financial condition, results of operations and business prospects may be harmed.

New legislation could restrict our ability to make mortgage loans, which could harm our earnings.

Several states and cities are considering or have passed laws, regulations or ordinances aimed at curbing predatory lending practices. The federal government is also considering legislative and regulatory proposals in this regard. In general, these proposals involve lowering the existing federal Homeownership and Equity Protection Act thresholds for defining a high-cost loan, and establishing enhanced protections and remedies for borrowers who receive such loans. However, many of these laws and rules extend beyond curbing predatory lending practices to restrict commonly accepted lending activities, including some of our activities. For example, some of these laws and rules prohibit any form of prepayment charge or severely restrict a borrower's ability to finance the points and fees charged in connection with the borrower's loan. In addition, some of these laws and regulations provide for extensive assignee liability for warehouse lenders, whole loan buyers and securitization trusts. Because of enhanced risk and for reputational reasons, many whole loan buyers elect not to purchase any loan labeled as a high cost loan under any local, state or federal law or regulation. Accordingly, these laws and rules could severely constrict the secondary market for a significant portion of our loan production. This would effectively preclude us from continuing to originate loans that fit within the newly defined thresholds. For example, after the October 1, 2002 effective date of the Georgia Fair Lending Act, our lenders and secondary market buyers refused to finance or purchase our Georgia loans. As a result, we were forced to cease providing mortgages in Georgia until the law's amendment a few months later.

Similar laws have gone into effect in New Jersey, New Mexico and Massachusetts that have impacted our ability to originate loans in those states. Moreover, some of our competitors who are, or are owned by, national banks or federally chartered thrifts may not be subject to these laws and may, therefore, be able to capture market share from us and other lenders. For example, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency issued regulations effective January 7, 2004 that preempt state and local laws that seek to regulate mortgage lending practices by national banks. Passage of such state and local laws could increase compliance costs and reduce fee income and origination volume, all of which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

We are no longer able to rely on the Alternative Mortgage Transactions Parity Act to preempt certain state law restrictions on prepayment penalties, which could harm our earnings.

The value of a mortgage loan depends, in part, upon the expected period of time that the mortgage loan will be outstanding. If a borrower pays off a mortgage loan in advance of this expected period, the holder of the mortgage loan does not realize the full value expected to be received from the loan. A prepayment penalty payable by a borrower who repays a loan earlier than expected helps offset the reduction in value resulting from the early payoff. Consequently, the value of a mortgage loan is enhanced to the extent the loan includes a prepayment penalty, and a mortgage lender can offer a lower interest rate and/or lower loan fees on a loan which has a prepayment penalty. Prepayment penalties are an important feature used to obtain value on the loans we originate.

Certain state laws restrict or prohibit prepayment penalties on mortgage loans and, until July 2003, we relied on the federal Alternative Mortgage Transactions Parity Act, or the Parity Act, and related rules issued in the past by the Office of Thrift Supervision, or OTS, to preempt state limitations on prepayment penalties. The Parity Act was enacted to extend to financial institutions, like us, which are not federally chartered depository institutions, the federal preemption that federally chartered depository institutions enjoy. However, in September 2002, the OTS released a rule that reduced the scope of the Parity Act preemption and, as a result, we are no longer able to rely on the Parity Act to preempt state restrictions on prepayment penalties. The elimination of this federal preemption has required us to comply with state restrictions on prepayment penalties. These restrictions prohibit us from charging any prepayment penalty in six states and limit the amount or other terms and

conditions of our

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prepayment penalties in several other states. This places us at a competitive disadvantage relative to financial institutions that will continue to enjoy federal preemption of such state restrictions. Such institutions are able to charge prepayment penalties without regard to state restrictions and, as a result, may be able to offer loans with interest rate and loan fee structures that are more attractive than the interest rate and loan fee structures that we are able to offer. This competitive disadvantage could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

The scope of our lending operations exposes us to risks of noncompliance with an increasing and inconsistent body of complex laws and regulations at the federal, state and local levels.

Because we are authorized to originate mortgage loans in all 50 U.S. states, we must comply with the laws and regulations, as well as judicial and administrative decisions, for all of these jurisdictions, as well as an extensive body of federal law and regulations. The volume of new or modified laws and regulations has increased in recent years, and individual cities and counties have begun to enact laws that restrict subprime loan origination activities in those cities and counties. The laws and regulations of each of these jurisdictions are different, complex and, in some cases, in direct conflict with each other. As our operations continue to grow, it may be more difficult to comprehensively identify, to accurately interpret and to properly program our technology systems and effectively train our personnel with respect to all of these laws and regulations, thereby potentially increasing our exposure to the risks of noncompliance with these laws and regulations.

Our failure to comply with these laws can lead to:

civil and criminal liability;

loss of licensure;

damage to our reputation in the industry;

inability to sell or securitize our loans;

demands for indemnification or loan repurchases from purchasers of our loans;

finances and penalties and litigation, including class action lawsuits; or

administrative enforcement actions.

Any of these results could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

If warehouse lenders and securitization underwriters face exposure stemming from legal violations committed by the companies to whom they provide financing or underwriting services, this could increase our borrowing costs and harm the market for whole loans

and mortgage-backed securities.

In June 2003, a California jury found a warehouse lender and securitization underwriter liable in part for fraud on consumers committed by a lender to whom it provided financing and underwriting services. The jury found that the investment bank was aware of the fraud and substantially assisted the lender in perpetrating the fraud by providing financing and underwriting services that allowed the lender to continue to operate, and held the bank liable for 10% of the plaintiff's damages. This is the first case we know of in which an investment bank was held partly responsible for violations committed by the bank's mortgage lender customer. If other courts or regulators adopt this theory, investment banks may face increased litigation as they are named as defendants in lawsuits and regulatory actions against the mortgage companies with which they do business. Some investment banks may exit the business, charge more for warehouse lending or reduce the prices they pay for whole loans in order to build in the costs of this potential litigation. This could, in turn, harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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If lenders are prohibited from originating loans in the State of Illinois with fees in excess of 3% where the interest rate exceeds 8%, this could force us to curtail operations in Illinois.

In March 2004, an Illinois Court of Appeals found that the Illinois Interest Act, which caps fees at 3% for loans with an interest rate in excess of 8%, is not preempted by federal law. This ruling contradicts the view of the Federal Circuit Courts of Appeal, most state courts, the OTS and the Illinois Office of the Attorney General. In November 2004, the Illinois Supreme Court decided to consider an appeal to this case. If this ruling is not overturned, we may reduce operations in Illinois since it will reduce the return we and our investors can expect on higher risk loans. Moreover, as a result of this ruling, plaintiffs are filing actions against lenders, including us, seeking various forms of relief as a result of any fees received in the past that exceeded the applicable thresholds. Any such actions, if decided against us, could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

High delinquencies or losses on the mortgage loans in our securitizations may decrease our cash flows or impair our ability to sell or securitize loans in the future.

Loans we make to lower credit grade borrowers, including credit-impaired borrowers, entail a higher risk of delinquency and higher losses than loans we make to borrowers with better credit. Most of our loans are made to borrowers who do not qualify for loans from conventional mortgage lenders. No assurance can be given that our underwriting criteria or methods will afford adequate protection against the higher risks associated with loans made to lower credit grade borrowers. We continue to be subject to risks of default and foreclosure following the sale of loans through securitization. To the extent such losses are greater than expected, the cash flows we receive through residual interests and from our securitizations structured as financings would be reduced. Increased delinquencies or losses may also reduce our ability to sell or securitize loans in the future. Any such reduction in our cash flows or impairment in our performance could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Our interest-only loans may have a higher risk of default than our fully-amortizing loans.

During the year ended December 31, 2004, originations of interest-only loans totaled \$8.1 billion, or 19.3%, of total originations. These interest-only loans require the borrowers to make monthly payments only of accrued interest for the first 24, 36 or 120 months following origination. After such interest-only period, the borrower's monthly payment is recalculated to cover both interest and principal so that the mortgage loan will amortize fully prior to its final payment date. The interest-only feature may reduce the likelihood of prepayment during the interest-only period due to the smaller monthly payments relative to a fully-amortizing mortgage loan. If the monthly payment increases, the related borrower may not be able to pay the increased amount and may default or may refinance the related mortgage loan to avoid the higher payment. Because no principal payments may be made on such mortgage loans for an extended period following origination, if the borrower defaults, the unpaid principal balance of the related mortgage loan will be greater than otherwise would be the case, increasing the risk of loss in that situation.

The loss of our exemption under the Investment Company Act would harm us and the market price of our shares of common stock and our ability to make distributions to our stockholders.

We are not currently regulated as an investment company under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, or the Investment Company Act, and we intend to operate so as to not become regulated as an investment company under the Investment Company Act. For example, we intend to qualify for an exemption under the Investment Company Act that is available to companies that are primarily engaged in the business of purchasing or otherwise acquiring mortgages and other liens on and interests in real estate. Specifically, we intend to invest at least 55% of

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our assets in mortgage loans or mortgage-related assets securities that represent the entire ownership in a pool of mortgage loans and at least an additional 25% of our assets in mortgages, mortgage-related assets securities, securities of REITs and other real estate-related assets. As of December 31, 2004, 69% of our assets consisted of mortgage loans or mortgage-related assets that represent the entire ownership in a pool of mortgage loans and another 21% of our assets were invested in mortgages, mortgage-related assets, securities of REITs and other real estate-related assets.

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If we fail to qualify for that exemption, we may be required to restructure our activities. For example, if the market value of our investments in equity securities were to increase by an amount that caused less than 55% of our assets to be invested in mortgage loans or mortgage-related assets that represent the entire ownership in a pool of mortgage loans, we might have to sell equity securities in order to qualify for an exemption under the Investment Company Act. In the event we must restructure our activities, such restructuring could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Our inability to realize cash proceeds from loan sales and securitizations in excess of the loan acquisition cost could harm our financial position.

The net cash proceeds received from loan sales consist of the premiums we receive on sales of loans in excess of the outstanding principal balance, plus the cash proceeds we receive from securitizations structured as sales, minus the discounts on loans that we have to sell for less than the outstanding principal balance. If we are unable to originate loans at a cost lower than the cash proceeds realized from loan sales, such inability could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Our credit facilities are subject to margin calls based on the lender's opinion of the value of our loan collateral. An unanticipated large margin call could harm our liquidity.

The amount of financing we receive under our credit facilities depends in large part on the lender's valuation of the mortgage loans that secure the financings. Each such facility provides the lender the right, under certain circumstances, to re-evaluate the loan collateral that secures our outstanding borrowings at any time. In the event the lender determines that the value of the loan collateral has decreased, it has the right to initiate a margin call. A margin call would require us to provide the lender with additional collateral or to repay a portion of the outstanding borrowings. Any such margin call could harm our liquidity, results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Our hedging strategies may not be successful in mitigating our risks associated with interest rates.

We use various derivative financial instruments to provide a level of protection against interest rate risks, but no hedging strategy can protect us completely. When rates change, we expect to record a gain or loss on derivatives, which would be offset by an inverse change in the value of loans or residual interests. Additionally, from time to time, we may enter into hedging transactions in connection with our holdings of mortgage-backed securities and government securities with respect to one or more of our assets or liabilities. Our hedging activities may include entering into interest rate swaps, caps and floors, options to purchase these items, and futures and forward contracts. Currently, we intend to primarily use Euro Dollar futures contracts and interest rate swap agreements to manage the interest rate risk of our portfolio of adjustable-rate mortgages; however, our actual hedging decisions will be determined in light of the facts and circumstances existing at the time and may differ from our currently anticipated hedging strategy. Any significant decrease in interest rates could result in a significant margin call, which would require us to provide the counterparty with additional cash collateral. Any such margin call could harm our liquidity, results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

We cannot assure you that our use of derivatives will offset the risks related to changes in interest rates. There have been periods, and it is likely that there will be periods in the future, during which we will incur losses after accounting for our derivative financial instruments. The derivative financial instruments we select may not have the effect of reducing our interest rate risk. In addition, the nature and timing of hedging transactions may influence the effectiveness of these strategies. Poorly designed strategies or improperly executed transactions could actually increase our risk and losses. In addition, hedging strategies involve transaction and other costs. We cannot assure you that our hedging strategy and the derivatives that we use will adequately offset the risk of interest rate volatility or that our hedging transactions will not result in losses,

and such losses could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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Complying with REIT requirements may limit our ability to hedge interest rate risk effectively.

The existing REIT provisions of the Code substantially limit our ability to hedge mortgage-backed securities and government securities and related borrowings. Under these provisions, our aggregate gross income from qualified hedges (which generally include certain financial instruments used to hedge indebtedness incurred or to be incurred to acquire or carry real estate assets), together with any other income from certain non-qualifying sources, is limited to not more than 25% of our annual gross income. In addition, we must limit our aggregate gross income from non-qualified hedges, fees, and certain other non-qualifying sources to not more than 5% of our annual gross income. For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, we must meet certain additional identification and other requirements for hedges to be qualified, and qualified hedges generally will be excluded from income in applying the foregoing 5% test. As a result, we might in the future have to limit our use of advantageous hedging techniques or implement those hedges through a taxable REIT subsidiary. This could increase the cost of our hedging activities or leave us exposed to greater risks associated with changes in interest rates than we would otherwise want to bear, which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

A decline in the quality of servicing could lower the value of our residual interests and our ability to sell or securitize loans and could harm the cash flows from our securitizations structured as financings.

In March 2001, we sold to Ocwen Federal Bank FSB the servicing rights on \$4.8 billion of our servicing portfolio, which consisted of 25 separate asset-backed securities. In October 2002, we re-established our servicing platform. However, Ocwen continues to service the mortgage loans underlying our residual interests in transactions closed prior to 2003. Poor servicing and collections by third-party servicers could harm the value of our residual interests and our ability to sell or securitize loans, which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects. Likewise, poor servicing by our own servicing operation could harm the cash flows from our securitizations structured as financings, could hamper our ability to sell or securitize loans and could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

The complex federal, state and municipal laws governing loan servicing activities could increase our exposure to the risk of noncompliance.

We service loans originated on a nationwide basis. Therefore, we must comply with the laws and regulations, as well as judicial and administrative decisions, of all relevant jurisdictions pertaining to loan servicing, as well as an extensive body of federal laws and regulations. The volume of new or modified laws and regulations has increased in recent years and, in addition, some individual municipalities have begun to enact laws that restrict loan servicing activities. The laws and regulations of each of these jurisdictions are different, complex and, in some cases, in direct conflict with each other. As our servicing operations continue to grow, it may be more difficult to comprehensively identify, to accurately interpret and to properly program our technology systems and effectively train our personnel with respect to all of these laws and regulations, thereby potentially increasing our exposure to the risks of noncompliance with the laws and regulations pertaining to loan servicing. Our failure to comply with these laws could lead to, among other things: (i) civil and criminal liability, including potential monetary penalties; (ii) legal defenses delaying or otherwise harming the servicer's ability to enforce loans, or giving the borrower the right to rescind or cancel the loan transactions; (iii) class action lawsuits; and (iv) administrative enforcement actions. This could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

We are subject to losses due to fraudulent and negligent acts on the part of loan applicants, mortgage brokers, other vendors and our employees.

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When we originate mortgage loans, we rely heavily upon information supplied by third parties, including the information contained in the loan application, property appraisal, title information and employment and income documentation. If any of this information is intentionally or negligently misrepresented and such misrepresentation is not detected prior to loan funding, the value of the loan may be significantly lower than

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expected. Whether a misrepresentation is made by the loan applicant, the mortgage broker, another third party or one of our employees, we generally bear the risk of loss associated with the misrepresentation. A loan subject to a material misrepresentation is typically unsaleable or subject to repurchase if it is sold prior to detection of the misrepresentation, and the persons and entities involved are often difficult to locate and it is often difficult to collect any monetary losses that we have suffered from them.

We have controls and processes designed to help us identify misrepresented information in our loan origination operations. We cannot assure you, however, that we have detected or will detect all misrepresented information in our loan originations.

We may be subject to fines or other penalties based upon the conduct of our independent brokers.

The mortgage brokers from which we obtain loans have parallel and separate legal obligations to which they are subject. While these laws may not explicitly hold the originating lenders responsible for the legal violations of mortgage brokers, increasingly federal and state agencies have sought to impose such liability on parties that take assignments of such loans. Recently, for example, the United States Federal Trade Commission, or FTC, entered into a settlement agreement with a mortgage lender where the FTC characterized a broker that had placed all of its loan production with a single lender as the agent of the lender. The FTC imposed a fine on the lender in part because, as principal, the lender was legally responsible for the mortgage broker's unfair and deceptive acts and practices. The United States Justice Department in the past has sought to hold a subprime mortgage lender responsible for the pricing practices of its mortgage brokers, alleging that the mortgage lender was directly responsible for the total fees and charges paid by the borrower under the Fair Housing Act even if the lender neither dictated what the mortgage broker could charge nor kept the money for its own account. Accordingly, we may be subject to fines or other penalties based upon the conduct of our independent mortgage brokers.

Changes in the volume and cost of loans originated by our Wholesale Division may decrease our loan production and decrease our earnings.

We depend primarily on independent mortgage brokers and, to a lesser extent, on correspondent lenders for the origination and purchase of our wholesale mortgage loans, which constitute the majority of our loan production. These independent mortgage brokers have relationships with multiple lenders and are not obligated by contract or otherwise to do business with us. We compete with these lenders for the independent brokers' business on pricing, service, loan fees, costs and other factors. Competition from other lenders and purchasers of mortgage loans could negatively affect the volume and pricing of our wholesale loans, which could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

If many of our borrowers become subject to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act of 2003, our cash flows from our residual securities and our securitizations structured as financings may be harmed.

Under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, which in 2003 re-enacted the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act of 1940, a borrower who enters military service after the origination of the borrower's mortgage loan generally may not be charged interest above an annual rate of 6% during the period of the borrower's active duty status. The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act also applies to a borrower who was on reserve status and is called to active duty after origination of the mortgage loan. A prolonged, significant military mobilization as part of the war on terrorism or the war in Iraq could increase the number of the borrowers in our securitized pools who are subject to the Act and thereby reduce the interest payments collected from those borrowers. To the extent the number of borrowers who are subject to the Act is significant, the cash flows we receive from loans underlying our securitizations structured as financings and from our residual interests would be reduced, which could cause us to reduce the carrying value of our residual interests and could decrease our earnings. In addition, the Act imposes limitations that could

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impair the ability of the servicer to foreclose on an affected mortgage loan during the borrower's period of active duty status, and, under certain circumstances, during an additional three month period thereafter. Any such reduction in our cash flows or impairment in our performance could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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The inability to attract and retain qualified employees could significantly harm our business.

We depend on our wholesale account executives and retail loan officers to attract borrowers by, among other things, developing relationships with financial institutions, other mortgage companies and brokers, real estate agents, borrowers and others. We believe that these relationships lead to repeat and referral business. The market for skilled account executives and loan officers is highly competitive and historically has experienced a high rate of turnover. In addition, if a manager is no longer employed by us, there is an increased likelihood that other members of his or her team will leave our employ as well. Competition for qualified account executives and loan officers may lead to increased hiring and retention costs. If we are unable to attract or retain a sufficient number of skilled account executives at manageable costs, we will be unable to continue to originate quality mortgage loans that we are able to sell for a profit, which would harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Our management has limited experience operating a REIT and we cannot assure you that our management's past experience will be sufficient to successfully manage our business as a REIT.

The requirements for qualifying as a REIT are highly technical and complex. We have only recently begun to operate as a REIT and our management has limited experience in complying with the income, asset and other limitations imposed by the REIT provisions of the Code. Those provisions are complex and the failure to comply with those provisions in a timely manner could prevent us from qualifying as a REIT or could force us to pay unexpected taxes and penalties. In such event, our net income would be reduced and we could incur a loss, which could harm our results of operation, financial condition and business prospects.

An interruption in or breach of our information systems may result in lost business.

We rely heavily upon communications and information systems to conduct our business. Any failure or interruption or breach in security of our information systems or the third-party information systems on which we rely could cause underwriting or other delays and could result in fewer loan applications being received, slower processing of applications and reduced efficiency in loan servicing. We are required to comply with significant federal and state regulations with respect to the handling of customer information, and a failure, interruption or breach of our information systems could result in regulatory action and litigation against us. We cannot assure you that such failures or interruptions will not occur or if they do occur that they will be adequately addressed by us or the third parties on which we rely. The occurrence of any failures or interruptions could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

The success and growth of our business will depend upon our ability to adapt to and implement technological changes.

Our mortgage loan origination business is currently dependent upon our ability to effectively interface with our brokers, borrowers and other third parties and to efficiently process loan applications and closings. The origination process is becoming more dependent upon technological advancement, such as the ability to process applications over the Internet, accept electronic signatures and provide process status updates instantly and other customer-expected conveniences that are cost-efficient to our process. In addition, we have recently implemented a new loan origination system. Becoming proficient with the new loan origination system and other new technology will require significant financial and personnel resources. There is no guarantee that the implementation of our new loan origination system or other new technology will be successful. To the extent that we become reliant on any particular technology or technological solution, we may be harmed to the extent that such technology or technological solution (i) becomes non-compliant with existing industry standards, (ii) fails to meet or exceed the capabilities of our competitors' equivalent technologies or technological solutions, (iii) becomes increasingly expensive to service, retain and update, or (iv) becomes subject to third-party claims of copyright or patent infringement. Any failure to acquire technologies or technological solutions when

necessary could limit our ability to remain competitive in our industry and could also limit our ability to increase the cost- efficiencies of our operating model, which would harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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We may be required to repurchase mortgage loans or indemnify investors if we breach representations and warranties, which could harm our earnings.

When we sell loans, we are required to make customary representations and warranties about such loans to the loan purchaser. Our whole loan sale agreements require us to repurchase or substitute loans in the event we breach a representation or warranty given to the loan purchaser or make a misrepresentation during the mortgage loan origination process. In addition, we may be required to repurchase loans as a result of borrower fraud or in the event of early payment default on a mortgage loan. Likewise, we are required to repurchase or substitute loans if we breach a representation or warranty in connection with our securitizations. The remedies available to a purchaser of mortgage loans are generally broader than those available to us against the originating broker or correspondent. Further, if a purchaser enforces its remedies against us, we may not be able to enforce the remedies we have against the sellers. The repurchased loans typically can only be financed at a steep discount to their repurchase price, if at all. They are also typically sold at a significant discount to the unpaid principal balance. Significant repurchase activity could harm our cash flow, results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

We are exposed to the risk of environmental liabilities with respect to properties to which we take title.

In the course of our business, we may foreclose and take title to residential properties and could be subject to environmental liabilities with respect to these properties. We may be held liable to a governmental entity or to third parties for property damage, personal injury, investigation, and cleanup costs incurred by these parties in connection with environmental contamination, or may be required to investigate or clean up hazardous or toxic substances, or chemical releases at a property. The costs associated with investigation or remediation activities could be substantial. In addition, as the owner or former owner of a contaminated site, we may be subject to common law claims by third parties based on damages and costs resulting from environmental contamination emanating from the property. If we ever become subject to significant environmental liabilities, our cash flow, results of operations, financial condition and business prospects could be harmed.

If we do not manage our growth effectively, our financial performance could be harmed.

In recent years, we have experienced rapid growth that has placed, and will continue to place, certain pressures on our management, administrative, operational and financial infrastructure. As of December 31, 2000, we had approximately 1,500 employees and by December 31, 2004, we had approximately 5,200 employees. Many of these employees have a limited understanding of our systems and controls. The increase in the size of our operations may make it more difficult for us to ensure that we originate quality loans and that we service them effectively. We will need to attract and hire additional sales and management personnel in an intensely competitive hiring environment in order to preserve and increase our market share. At the same time, we will need to continue to upgrade and expand our financial, operational and managerial systems and controls.

Various factors may cause the market price of our common stock to become volatile, which could harm our ability to access the capital markets in the future.

The market price of our common stock may experience fluctuations that are unrelated to our operating performance. In particular, the market price of our common stock may be affected by general market price movements as well as developments specifically related to the consumer finance industry and the financial services sector. These could include, among other things, interest rate movements, quarterly variations or changes in financial estimates by securities analysts, or a significant reduction in the price of the stock of another participant in the consumer finance industry. This volatility may make it difficult for us to access the capital markets through additional secondary offerings of our common stock, regardless of our financial performance, and such difficulty may preclude us from being able to take advantage of certain business

opportunities or meet our obligations, which could, in turn, harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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We may change our policies in ways that harm our financial condition or results of operations.

Our investment and financing policies and our policies with respect to other activities, including our growth, debt capitalization, distributions, REIT status and operating policies are determined by our board of directors. Our board of directors may change these policies at any time without a vote of our stockholders. A change in these policies might harm our financial condition, results of operations and business prospects.

Compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and proposed and recently enacted changes in securities laws and regulations are likely to increase our costs.

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and rules and regulations promulgated by the Securities and Exchange Commission and the NYSE have increased the scope, complexity and cost of corporate governance, reporting and disclosure practices for public companies, including ourselves. These rules and regulations could also make it more difficult for us to attract and retain qualified executive officers and members of our board of directors, particularly to serve on our audit committee.

Certain provisions of Maryland law and our charter and bylaws could hinder, delay or prevent a change in control of us.

Certain provisions of Maryland law and our charter and bylaws could have the effect of discouraging, delaying or preventing transactions that involve an actual or threatened change in control of us, and may have the effect of entrenching our management and members of our board of directors, regardless of performance. These provisions include the following:

Classified board of directors. Our board of directors is divided into three classes with staggered terms of office of three years each. The classification and staggered terms of office of our directors make it more difficult for a third party to gain control of our board of directors. At least two annual meetings of stockholders, instead of one, generally would be required to effect a change in a majority of our board of directors.

Removal of directors. Under our charter, subject to the rights of one or more classes or series of preferred stock to elect one or more directors, a director may be removed only for cause and only by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of all votes entitled to be cast by our stockholders generally in the election of directors.

Number of directors, board vacancies, term of office. Under our bylaws, we have elected to be subject to certain provisions of Maryland law which vest in the board of directors the exclusive right to determine the number of directors and the exclusive right, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining directors, to fill vacancies on the board of directors, even if the remaining directors do not constitute a quorum. These provisions of Maryland law, which are applicable even if other provisions of Maryland law or the charter or bylaws provide to the contrary, also provide that any director elected to fill a vacancy shall hold office for the remainder of the full term of the class of directors in which the vacancy occurred, rather than the next annual meeting of stockholders as would otherwise be the case, and until his or her successor is elected and qualified.

Limitation on stockholder requested special meetings. Our bylaws provide that our stockholders have the right to call a special meeting only upon the written request of the stockholders entitled to cast not less than a majority of all the votes entitled to be cast by our stockholders at such meeting.

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Advance notice provisions for stockholder nominations and proposals. Our bylaws require advance written notice for stockholders to nominate persons for election as directors at, or to bring other business before, any meeting of our stockholders. This bylaw provision limits the ability of our stockholders to make nominations of persons for election as directors or to introduce other proposals unless we are notified in a timely manner prior to the meeting.

Exclusive authority of our board to amend our bylaws. Our bylaws provide that our board of directors has the exclusive power to adopt, alter or repeal any provision of our bylaws or to make new bylaws. Thus, our stockholders may not effect any changes to our bylaws.

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Preferred stock. Under our charter, our board of directors has authority to issue preferred stock from time to time in one or more series and to establish the terms, preferences and rights of any such series of preferred stock, all without approval of our stockholders.

Duties of directors with respect to unsolicited takeovers. Maryland law provides protection for Maryland corporations against unsolicited takeovers by limiting, among other things, the duties of the directors in unsolicited takeover situations. The duties of directors of Maryland corporations do not require them to (1) accept, recommend or respond to any proposal by a person seeking to acquire control of the corporation, (2) authorize the corporation to redeem any rights under, or modify or render inapplicable, any stockholders rights plan, (3) make a determination under the Maryland Business Combination Act or the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act, or (4) act or fail to act solely because of the effect of the act or failure to act may have on an acquisition or potential acquisition of control of the corporation or the amount or type of consideration that may be offered or paid to the stockholders in an acquisition. Moreover, under Maryland law the act of the directors of a Maryland corporation relating to or affecting an acquisition or potential acquisition of control is not subject to any higher duty or greater scrutiny than is applied to any other act of a director. Maryland law also contains a statutory presumption that an act of a director of a Maryland corporation satisfies the applicable standards of conduct for directors under Maryland law.

Ownership limit. In order to preserve our status as a REIT under the Code, our charter generally prohibits any single stockholder, or any group of affiliated stockholders, from beneficially owning more than 9.8% in value or number of shares, whichever is more restrictive, of the aggregate of the outstanding shares of any class or series of our common stock unless the board of directors waives or modifies this ownership limit.

Maryland Business Combination Act. The Maryland Business Combination Act provides that unless exempted, a Maryland corporation may not engage in business combinations, including mergers, dispositions of 10% or more of its assets, certain issuances of shares of stock and other specified transactions, with an interested stockholder or an affiliate of an interested stockholder for five years after the most recent date on which the interested stockholder became an interested stockholder, and thereafter unless specified criteria are met. An interested stockholder is generally a person owning or controlling, directly or indirectly, 10% or more of the voting power of the outstanding stock of a Maryland corporation. Our board of directors has adopted a resolution exempting us from this statute. However, our board of directors may repeal or modify this resolution in the future, in which case the provisions of the Maryland Business Combination Act will be applicable to business combinations between us and other persons.

Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act. Maryland law provides that control shares of a corporation acquired in a control share acquisition shall have no voting rights except to the extent approved by a vote of two-thirds of the votes eligible to be cast on the matter under the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act. Control shares means shares of stock that, if aggregated with all other shares of stock previously acquired by the acquirer, would entitle the acquirer to exercise voting power in electing directors within one of the following ranges of the voting power: one tenth or more but less than one third, one third or more but less than a majority or a majority or more of all voting power. A control share acquisition means the acquisition of control shares, subject to certain exceptions. If voting rights of control shares acquired in a control share acquisition are not approved at a stockholders meeting, then subject to certain conditions and limitations, the issuer may redeem any or all of the control shares for fair value. If voting rights of such control shares are approved at a stockholders meeting and the acquirer becomes entitled to vote a majority of the shares of stock entitled to vote, all other stockholders may exercise appraisal rights. Our bylaws contain a provision exempting acquisitions of our shares from the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act. However, our board of directors may amend our bylaws in the future to repeal or modify this exemption, in which case any control shares acquired in a control share acquisition will be subject to the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act.

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TAX RISKS RELATED TO OUR STATUS AS A REIT

Your investment has various federal income tax risks.

Although the provisions of the Code relevant to your investment are generally described in **Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations**, we strongly urge you to consult with your own tax advisor concerning the effects of federal, state and local income tax law on an investment in our common stock and on your individual tax situation.

Our compliance with REIT requirements might cause us to forego otherwise attractive opportunities, including certain acquisitions.

In order to qualify as a REIT for U.S. federal income tax purposes, we must satisfy tests concerning, among other things, our sources of income, the nature and diversification of our assets, the amounts we distribute to our stockholders and the ownership of our stock. We may also be required to make distributions to our stockholders at disadvantageous times or when we do not have funds readily available for distribution. Thus, compliance with REIT requirements may cause us to forego opportunities, including certain acquisitions, we would otherwise pursue.

The tax imposed on REITs engaging in prohibited transactions will limit our ability to engage in transactions, including certain methods of securitizing loans, which would be treated as sales for federal income tax purposes.

A REIT's net income from prohibited transactions is subject to a 100% tax. In general, prohibited transactions are sales or other dispositions of property, other than foreclosure property but including any mortgage loans held in inventory primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business. We might be subject to this tax if we were to sell a loan or securitize the loans in a manner that was treated as a sale of such inventory for federal income tax purposes. Therefore, in order to avoid the prohibited transactions tax, we may choose not to engage in certain sales of loans other than through our taxable REIT subsidiaries and may limit the structures we utilize for our securitization transactions even though such sales or structures might otherwise be beneficial for us. In addition, this prohibition may limit our ability to restructure our portfolio of mortgage loans from time to time even if we believe it would be in our best interest to do so.

We will incur excess inclusion income that will increase the tax liability of our stockholders.

Our excess inclusion income will be allocated among our stockholders. A stockholder's share of excess inclusion income (i) would not be allowed to be offset by any net operating losses otherwise available to the stockholder, (ii) would be subject to tax as unrelated business taxable income in the hands of most types of stockholders that are otherwise generally exempt from federal income tax, and (iii) would result in the application of U.S. federal income tax withholding at the maximum rate (30%), without reduction for any otherwise applicable income tax treaty, to the extent allocable to most types of foreign stockholders. See **Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs**. The manner in which excess inclusion income would be allocated among shares of different classes of our stock or how such income is to be reported to stockholders is not clear under current law. Tax-exempt investors, foreign investors, and taxpayers with net operating losses should carefully consider the tax consequences described above and are urged to consult their tax advisors in connection with their decision to invest in New Century common stock.

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Excess inclusion income is generated when we issue debt obligations with two or more maturities and the terms of the payments on these obligations bear a relationship to the payments that we received on our mortgage loans or mortgage-backed securities securing those debt obligations. Since electing to be taxed as a REIT, we

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have engaged in non-REMIC CMO securitizations. These CMO securitizations have been structured so that these borrowings will give rise to excess inclusion income, and it is probable that future CMO securitizations will be structured in a similar manner. We may also enter into various repurchase agreements that have differing maturity dates and afford the lender the right to sell any pledged mortgage securities if we default on our obligations. Excess inclusion income could also result if we were to hold a residual interest in a REMIC. Finally, we may invest in equity securities of other REITs and it is possible that we might receive excess inclusion income from those investments. The amount of excess inclusion income in any given year from these activities, transactions and investments could be significant.

Even if we qualify as a REIT, the income earned by our taxable REIT subsidiaries will be subject to federal income tax and we could be subject to an excise tax on non-arm s-length transactions with our taxable REIT subsidiaries.

Our taxable REIT subsidiaries, including New Century TRS and its subsidiaries, expect to earn income from activities that are prohibited for REITs, and will owe income taxes on the taxable income from these activities. For example, we expect that New Century TRS and its subsidiaries will earn income from our loan origination and sales activities, as well as from other origination and servicing functions, which would generally not be qualifying income for purposes of the gross income tests applicable to REITs or might otherwise be subject to adverse tax liability if the income were generated by a REIT. New Century TRS and its subsidiaries will be taxable as C corporations and will be subject to federal, state and local income tax at the applicable corporate rates on their taxable income, notwithstanding our qualification as a REIT.

In the event that any transactions between us and New Century TRS and its subsidiaries are not conducted on an arm s-length basis, we could be subject to a 100% excise tax on certain amounts from such transactions. We believe that all such transactions will be conducted on an arm s-length basis, but there can be no assurance that the Internal Revenue Service, or the IRS, will not successfully contest the arm s-length nature of such transactions or that we will otherwise be able to avoid application of the 100% excise tax. Any such tax could affect our overall profitability and the amounts of cash available to make distributions.

We may, at some point in the future, borrow funds from one or more of our corporate subsidiaries. Although any such intercompany borrowings will be structured so as to constitute indebtedness for all tax purposes, no assurance can be given that the IRS will not challenge such arrangements, in which case the borrowing may be recharacterized as a dividend distribution to us by our subsidiary. Any such recharacterization may cause us to fail one or more of the REIT requirements.

We may be harmed by changes in tax laws applicable to REITs or the reduced 15% tax rate on certain corporate dividends may harm us.

Changes to the laws and regulations affecting us, including changes to securities laws and changes to the Code applicable to the taxation of REITs, may harm our business. New legislation may be enacted into law or new interpretations, rulings or regulations could be adopted, any of which could harm us and our stockholders, potentially with retroactive effect.

Generally, dividends paid by REITs are not eligible for the 15% U.S. federal income tax rate on certain corporate dividends, with certain exceptions discussed under the caption Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Common Stock. The more favorable treatment of regular corporate dividends could cause domestic non-corporate investors to consider stocks of other corporations that pay dividends as more attractive relative to stocks of REITs. It is not possible to predict whether the reduced 15% tax rate on certain corporate dividends will affect the market price of our common stock or what the effect will be.

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We may be unable to comply with the requirements applicable to REITs or compliance with such requirements could harm our financial condition.

We intend to qualify as a REIT under the Code, which will afford us significant tax advantages. The requirements for this qualification, however, are highly technical and complex and our management has limited experience in operating a REIT. Even a technical or inadvertent mistake could jeopardize our REIT status. The determination that we qualify as a REIT requires an analysis of various factual matters and circumstances that may not be totally within our control. For example, to qualify as a REIT, at least 75% of our gross income must come from real estate sources and 95% of our gross income must come from real estate sources and certain other sources that are itemized in the REIT tax laws, mainly interest and dividends. We are subject to various limitations on our ownership of securities, including a limitation that the value of our investment in taxable REIT subsidiaries, including New Century TRS and its subsidiaries, cannot exceed 20% of our total assets at the end of any calendar quarter. In addition, at the end of each calendar quarter, at least 75% of our assets must be qualifying real estate assets, government securities and cash and cash items. The need to comply with these asset ownership requirements may cause us to acquire other assets that are qualifying real estate assets for purposes of the REIT requirements (for example, interests in other mortgage loan portfolios or mortgage-related assets) but are not part of our overall business strategy and might not otherwise be the best investment alternative for us. Moreover, we may be unable to acquire sufficient qualifying REIT assets, due to our inability to obtain adequate financing or otherwise, in which case we may fail to qualify as a REIT.

To qualify as a REIT, we must distribute to our stockholders with respect to each year at least 90% of our REIT taxable income (determined without regard to the dividends paid deduction and by excluding any net capital gain). After-tax earnings generated by our taxable REIT subsidiaries and not distributed to us are not subject to these distribution requirements and may be retained by such subsidiaries to provide for future growth, subject to the limitations imposed by REIT tax rules. To the extent that we satisfy this distribution requirement, but distribute less than 100% of our taxable income, we will be subject to federal corporate income tax on our undistributed taxable income. In addition, we will be subject to a 4% nondeductible excise tax if the actual amount that we pay out to our stockholders in a calendar year is less than a minimum amount specified under federal tax laws. We could be required to borrow funds on a short-term basis even if conditions are not favorable for borrowing, or to sell loans from our portfolio potentially at disadvantageous prices, to meet the REIT distribution requirements and to avoid corporate income tax and the 4% nondeductible excise tax. These alternatives could harm our financial condition and could reduce amounts available to originate mortgage loans.

If we fail to qualify or remain qualified as a REIT, our distributions will not be deductible by us, and we will be subject to federal income tax on our taxable income. This would substantially reduce our earnings and our cash available to make distributions. The resulting tax liability, in the event of our failure to qualify as a REIT, might cause us to borrow funds, liquidate some of our investments or take other steps that could negatively affect our operating results. Moreover, if our REIT status is terminated because of our failure to meet a technical REIT requirement or if we voluntarily revoke our election, we generally would be disqualified from electing treatment as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year in which REIT status is lost.

In order to maintain our compliance with the REIT requirements, not more than 20% of the value of our total assets may be represented by the securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries at the close of any calendar quarter.

To qualify as a REIT, not more than 20% of the value of our total assets may be represented by the securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries at the close of any calendar quarter, subject to a 30-day cure period following the close of the quarter and, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, subject to certain relief provisions even after the 30-day cure period. If the IRS determines that the value of our investment in New Century TRS and our other taxable REIT subsidiaries was more than 20% of the value of our total assets at the close of any calendar quarter, we could lose our REIT status. Our taxable REIT subsidiaries, including New Century TRS and its subsidiaries, conduct a substantial portion of our business activities, including a majority of our loan origination and servicing activities. We have monitored and will continue to

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monitor the value of our investment in New Century TRS and our other taxable REIT subsidiaries in relation to our other assets to comply with the 20% asset test and will conduct quarterly valuations to confirm compliance. Those determinations for the relevant past periods have indicated that the value of our investment in New Century TRS and our other taxable REIT subsidiaries in relation to our other assets was below the 20% threshold. In certain cases, we may need to borrow from third parties to acquire additional qualifying REIT assets or increase the amount and frequency of dividends from our taxable REIT subsidiaries in order to comply with the 20% asset test. There can be no assurance that we will be successful in that effort. Moreover, there can be no assurance that the IRS will agree with those determinations or valuations.

Misplaced reliance on legal opinions or statements by issuers of mortgage-backed securities and government securities could result in a failure to comply with REIT gross income or assets tests.

When purchasing mortgage-backed securities and government securities, we may rely on opinions of counsel for the issuer or sponsor of such securities, or statements made in related offering documents, for purposes of determining whether and to what extent those securities constitute REIT real estate assets for purposes of the REIT asset tests and produce income that qualifies under the REIT gross income tests. The inaccuracy of any such opinions or statements may harm our REIT qualification and result in significant corporate level tax.

The stock ownership limit imposed by our charter may inhibit market activity in our stock and may restrict our business combination opportunities.

In order for us to maintain our qualification as a REIT under the Code, not more than 50% in value of the outstanding shares of our capital stock may be owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals (as defined in the Code to include certain entities) at any time during the last half of each taxable year after our first REIT taxable year. Our charter, with certain exceptions, authorizes our directors to take such actions as are necessary and desirable to preserve our qualification as a REIT and provides that, unless exempted by our board of directors, no person may beneficially own more than 9.8% in value or in number of shares, whichever is more restrictive, of the aggregate of the outstanding shares of any class or series of our capital stock. Our directors also have authority under our charter to impose a similar ownership limitation as to any separate class or series of preferred stock we may issue in the future. Our board of directors may grant an exemption from that ownership limit in its sole discretion, subject to such conditions, representations and undertakings as it may determine that are consistent with ensuring compliance with the REIT provisions of the Code. If anyone acquires shares in excess of the ownership limit or in violation of the ownership requirements of the Code for REITs, we:

will consider the transfer to be null and void;

will not reflect the transaction on our books;

may institute legal action to enjoin the transaction;

will not pay dividends or other distributions with respect to those shares;

will not recognize any voting rights for those shares; and

will consider the shares held in trust for the benefit of a charitable beneficiary as designated by us.

The trustee shall sell the shares held in trust and the owner of the excess shares will be entitled to the lesser of:

(1) the price paid by the transferee;

(2) if the transferee did not purchase the excess shares, the closing price for the shares on the national securities exchange on which our common stock is listed or quoted on the day of the event causing the shares to be held in trust; or

(3) the price received by the trustee from the sale of the shares.

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This ownership limit could delay or prevent a transaction or a change in our control that might involve a premium price for our common stock or otherwise be in our stockholders' best interest and may result in the entrenchment of our board of directors and management regardless of performance.

Our use of taxable REIT subsidiaries may affect the price of our common stock relative to the stock price of other REITs.

We conduct a substantial portion of our mortgage loan origination and servicing activities through one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries and possibly one or more qualified REIT subsidiaries. Taxable REIT subsidiaries are corporations subject to corporate-level tax. This REIT/taxable REIT subsidiary structure may cause the market to place a lower value on our common stock than the stock of other publicly-traded REITs, which may not use taxable REIT subsidiaries as extensively as we do.

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SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein include forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or the Exchange Act. Forward-looking statements are those that predict or describe future events or trends and that do not relate solely to historical matters. You can generally identify forward-looking statements as statements containing the words believe, expect, will, anticipate, intend, may, estimate, project, plan, assume, similar expressions, although not all forward-looking statements contain these identifying words. Statements regarding the following subjects contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus are forward-looking by their nature:

our business strategy, including our investment of capital to build a portfolio of mortgage assets;

our ability to manage risk, including credit risk;

our understanding of our competition;

market trends;

projected sources and uses of funds from operations;

potential liability with respect to legal proceedings; and

potential effects of proposed legislation and regulatory action.

You should not place undue reliance on our forward-looking statements because the matters they describe are subject to known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other unpredictable factors, many of which are beyond our control. Our forward-looking statements are based on the information currently available to us and are applicable only as of the date on the cover of this prospectus or, in the case of forward-looking statements incorporated by reference, as of the date of the filing that includes the statement. New risks and uncertainties arise from time to time, and it is impossible for us to predict these matters or how they may affect us. Over time, our actual results, performance or achievements will likely differ from the anticipated results, performance or achievements that are expressed or implied by our forward-looking statements, and such difference might be significant and materially adverse to our stockholders. Such factors include, but are not limited to:

those identified under the Risk Factors section of this prospectus;

those identified from time to time in our public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission;

the negative impact of economic slowdowns or recessions;

the effect of changes in interest rates;

the condition of the secondary markets for our products;

our access to funding sources and our ability to renew, replace or add to our existing repurchase arrangements and existing credit facilities on terms comparable to the current terms;

the assumptions underlying our residual values and repurchase allowances;

the impact of new state or federal legislation or court decisions on our operations;

the impact of new state or federal legislation or court decisions restricting the activities of lenders or suppliers of credit in our market;

an increase in the prepayment speed or default rate of our borrowers;

the effect of competition from finance and mortgage banking companies and from Internet-based lending companies;

our ability to adequately hedge our residual values;

our limited experience managing a REIT;

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the initiation of a margin call under our credit facilities;

the ability of our servicing operations to maintain high performance standards;

our ability to expand origination volume while maintaining low overhead;

our ability to attract and retain qualified employees, including, in particular, our senior executives;

our ability to adapt to and implement technological changes;

the stability of residential property values;

our ability to close our forward sale commitments;

management's ability to manage our growth and planned expansion; and

the outcome of litigation or regulatory actions pending against us.

We have no duty to, and do not intend to, update or revise the forward-looking statements in this prospectus after the date of this prospectus, even if subsequent events cause us to become aware of new risks or cause our expectations to change regarding the forward-looking matters discussed in this prospectus. We have identified some of the important factors that could cause future events to differ from our current expectations and they are described in this prospectus under the caption "Risk Factors," which you should review carefully. Please consider our forward-looking statements in light of those risks as you read this prospectus.

This prospectus contains and incorporates by reference market data, industry statistics and other data that have been obtained from, or compiled from, information made available by third parties. We have not independently verified their data.

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USE OF PROCEEDS

We do not know either the number of shares of our common stock, our preferred stock, our debt securities or our warrants that will be ultimately sold pursuant to this prospectus or the prices at which such shares will be sold. Unless otherwise indicated in an accompanying prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from any sale of securities under this prospectus for general corporate purposes, including, without limitation, to continue to build a portfolio of self-originated mortgage loans and for general working capital purposes, including using such proceeds to reduce short-term indebtedness.

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DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

The following is a summary description of the material terms of our common stock and undesignated preferred stock as set forth in our charter and that govern the rights of our common stock. While we believe that the following description covers the material terms of our capital stock, the description may not contain all of the information that is important to you. We encourage you to read carefully this entire document, our charter and the other documents we refer to for a more complete understanding of our capital stock.

General

As of April 15, 2005, we had 55,747,253 shares of our common stock issued and outstanding and no shares of our preferred stock issued and outstanding. Our charter provides that we may issue up to 300,000,000 shares of our common stock, \$0.01 par value per share, and 10,000,000 shares of our preferred stock, \$0.01 par value per share. Under the MGCL, stockholders generally are not liable for the corporation's debts or obligations.

Common Stock

Our common stock offered hereby will, upon issuance and receipt by us of payment therefor, be duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable. Subject to the preferential rights of any other class or series of stock and to the provisions of our charter regarding the restrictions on transfer of stock, holders of shares of our common stock are entitled to receive dividends on such stock if, as and when authorized and declared by our board of directors out of assets legally available therefor and to share ratably in our assets legally available for distribution to our stockholders in the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up after payment of or adequate provision for all our known debts and liabilities.

Subject to the provisions of our charter regarding the restrictions on ownership and transfer of stock and the terms of any other class or series of our capital stock, each outstanding share of our common stock entitles the holder to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of our stockholders, including the election of directors and, except as provided with respect to any other class or series of our stock, the holders of such shares of our common stock possess the exclusive voting power. There is no cumulative voting in the election of our directors, which means that the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of our common stock can elect all of the directors then standing for election in which case the holders of the remaining shares will not be able to elect any of our directors.

Shares of our common stock have no preference, conversion, exchange, sinking fund, or redemption and have no preemptive rights to subscribe for any of our securities. Subject to the provisions of our charter regarding the restrictions on ownership transfer of stock, shares of our common stock have equal dividend, liquidation and other rights.

Under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation generally cannot dissolve, amend its charter, merge, sell all or substantially all of its assets, engage in a share exchange or engage in similar transactions outside the ordinary course of business unless approved by the affirmative vote of stockholders holding at least two-thirds of the shares entitled to vote on the matter, unless a lesser percentage (but not fewer than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast by the stockholders on the matter) is set forth in the corporation's charter. Our charter provides that any such action shall be effective and valid if taken or authorized by our stockholders by the affirmative vote of a majority of all the votes entitled to be cast on the matter, except that amendments to the provisions of our charter relating to the removal of directors must be approved by our

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stockholders by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

Our charter authorizes our board of directors to reclassify any unissued shares of our common stock into other classes or series of classes of our stock, to establish the number of shares in each class or series and to set the preferences, conversion and other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends or other distributions, qualifications or terms or conditions of redemption for each such class or series.

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Preferred Stock

Our charter authorizes our board of directors to classify any unissued shares of our preferred stock and to reclassify any previously classified but unissued shares of any series of our preferred stock. Prior to issuance of shares of each class or series of our preferred stock, our board of directors is required by the MGCL and our charter to fix the terms, preferences, conversion or other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends or other distributions, qualifications and terms or conditions of redemption for each such class or series. Thus, our board of directors could authorize the issuance of shares of our preferred stock with terms and conditions which could have the effect of delaying, deterring or preventing a transaction or a change of control that might involve a premium price for our common stock or otherwise be in your best interest. Further, to the extent we issue preferred stock, holders of the preferred stock will likely have preferential rights to distributions made by us. As of the date of this prospectus, no shares of our preferred stock will be outstanding.

Power to Issue Additional Shares of our Common Stock and Preferred

We believe that the power of our board of directors to issue additional authorized but unissued shares of our common stock or preferred stock and to classify or reclassify unissued shares of our common stock or preferred stock and thereafter to cause us to issue such classified or reclassified shares of stock will provide us with increased flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions and in meeting other needs which might arise. The additional classes or series, as well as our common stock, are available for issuance without further action by our stockholders, unless such action is required by applicable law or the rules of any stock exchange or automated quotation system on which our securities may be listed or traded. Our board of directors could authorize us to issue a class or series that could, depending upon the terms of such class or series, delay, deter or prevent a transaction or a change in control of us that might involve a premium price for our common stock or otherwise be in your best interest and could result in the entrenchment of our board of directors and management, regardless of their performance.

Transfer Restrictions

Our charter, subject to certain exceptions, contains certain restrictions on the number of shares of our stock that a person may own. Our charter contains a stock ownership limit which will prohibit any person from acquiring or holding, directly or indirectly, shares of stock in excess of 9.8% of the lesser of the total number or value of any class or series of our stock. Our board of directors, in its sole discretion, may exempt a person from the stock ownership limit. However, our board of directors may not grant such an exemption to any person whose ownership, direct or indirect, of in excess of 9.8% of the lesser of the number or value of the outstanding shares of any class or series of our stock would result in us being closely held within the meaning of Section 856(h) of the Code or otherwise would result in us failing to qualify as a REIT. The person seeking an exemption must represent to the satisfaction of our board of directors that it will not violate the aforementioned restriction. The person also must agree that any violation or attempted violation of any of the foregoing restriction will result in the automatic transfer of the shares of stock causing such violation to the trust (as defined below). Our board of directors may require a ruling from the IRS or an opinion of counsel, in either case in form and substance satisfactory to our board of directors in its sole discretion, in order to determine or ensure our status as a REIT.

Our charter further prohibits:

any person from beneficially or constructively owning shares of our stock that would result in us being closely held under Section 856(h) of the Code or otherwise cause us to fail to qualify as a REIT; and

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any person from transferring shares of our stock if such transfer would result in shares of our stock being owned by fewer than 100 persons.

Any person who acquires or attempts or intends to acquire beneficial or constructive ownership of shares of our stock that will or may violate any of the foregoing restrictions on transferability and ownership, or any person who would have owned shares of our stock that resulted in a transfer of shares to the trust in the manner

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described below, will be required to give notice immediately to us and provide us with such other information as we may request in order to determine the effect of such transfer on us.

If any transfer of shares of our stock occurs that, if effective, would result in any person beneficially or constructively owning shares of our stock in excess or in violation of the above transfer or ownership limitations, then that number of shares of our stock the beneficial or constructive ownership of which otherwise would cause such person to violate such limitations (rounded to the nearest greatest whole share) shall be automatically transferred to a trust for the exclusive benefit of one or more charitable beneficiaries, and the prohibited owner shall not acquire any rights in such shares. Such automatic transfer shall be deemed to be effective as of the close of business on the business day prior to the date of such violative transfer. Shares of stock held in the trust shall be issued and outstanding shares of our stock. The prohibited owner shall not benefit economically from ownership of any shares of stock held in the trust, shall have no rights to dividends and shall not possess any rights to vote or other rights attributable to the shares of stock held in the trust. The trustee of the trust shall have all voting rights and rights to dividends or other distributions with respect to shares of stock held in the trust, which rights shall be exercised for the exclusive benefit of the charitable beneficiary. Any dividend or other distribution paid prior to the discovery by us that shares of stock have been transferred to the trustee shall be paid by the recipient of such dividend or distribution to the trustee upon demand, and any dividend or other distribution authorized but unpaid shall be paid when due to the trustee. Any dividend or distribution so paid to the trustee shall be held in trust for the charitable beneficiary. The prohibited owner shall have no voting rights with respect to shares of stock held in the trust and, subject to Maryland law, effective as of the date that such shares of stock have been transferred to the trust, the trustee shall have the authority (at the trustee's sole discretion):

to rescind as void any vote cast by a prohibited owner prior to the discovery by us that such shares have been transferred to the trust; and

to recast such vote in accordance with the desires of the trustee acting for the benefit of the charitable beneficiary. However, if we have already taken irreversible corporate action, then the trustee shall not have the authority to rescind and recast such vote.

Within 20 days after receiving notice from us that shares of our stock have been transferred to the trust, the trustee shall sell the shares of stock held in the trust to a person, designated by the trustee, whose ownership of the shares will not violate any of the ownership limitations set forth in our charter. Upon such sale, the interest of the charitable beneficiary in the shares sold shall terminate and the trustee shall distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the prohibited owner and to the charitable beneficiary as follows. The prohibited owner shall receive the lesser of:

the price paid by the prohibited owner for the shares or, if the prohibited owner did not give value for the shares in connection with the event causing the shares to be held in the trust (e.g., a gift, devise or other such transaction), the market price, as defined in our charter, of such shares on the day of the event causing the shares to be held in the trust; and

the price per share received by the trustee from the sale or other disposition of the shares held in the trust, in each case reduced by the costs incurred to enforce the ownership limits as to the shares in question. Any net sale proceeds in excess of the amount payable to the prohibited owner shall be paid immediately to the charitable beneficiary.

If, prior to the discovery by us that shares of our stock have been transferred to the trust, such shares are sold by a prohibited owner, then

such shares shall be deemed to have been sold on behalf of the trust; and

to the extent that the prohibited owner received an amount for such shares that exceeds the amount that such prohibited owner was entitled to receive pursuant to the aforementioned requirement, such excess shall be paid to the trustee upon demand.

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In addition, shares of our stock held in the trust shall be deemed to have been offered for sale to us, or our designee, at a price per share equal to the lesser of:

the price per share in the transaction that resulted in such transfer to the trust (or, in the case of a devise or gift, the market price at the time of such devise or gift); and

the market price on the date we, or our designee, accept such offer.

We shall have the right to accept such offer until the trustee has sold the shares of stock held in the trust. Upon such a sale to us, the interest of the charitable beneficiary in the shares sold shall terminate and the trustee shall distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the prohibited owner.

All certificates representing shares of our common stock and preferred stock, if issued, will bear a legend referring to the restrictions described above.

Every owner of more than 1% (or such lower percentage as required by the Code or the related regulations) of all classes or series of our stock, including shares of our common stock, within 30 days after the end of each fiscal year, shall be required to give written notice to us stating the name and address of such owner, the number of shares of each class and series of our stock which the owner beneficially owns and a description of the manner in which such shares are held. Each such owner shall provide to us such additional information as we may request in order to determine the effect, if any, of such beneficial ownership on our status as a REIT and to ensure compliance with the stock ownership limits. In addition, each stockholder shall upon demand be required to provide to us such information as we may reasonably request in order to determine our status as a REIT and to comply with the requirements of any taxing authority or governmental authority or to determine such compliance. We may request such information after every sale, disposition or transfer of our common stock.

These ownership limits could delay, deter or prevent a change in control or other transaction that might involve a premium price for our common stock or otherwise be in your best interest.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

Mellon Investor Services LLC is the transfer agent and registrar for shares of our common stock.

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DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK

The following description of our preferred stock sets forth certain general terms and provisions of our preferred stock to which any prospectus supplement may relate. The statements below describing our preferred stock are in all respects subject to and qualified in their entirety by reference to the applicable provisions of our charter (including the applicable articles supplementary) and bylaws.

General

Subject to limitations prescribed by Maryland law and our charter, our board of directors is authorized to fix the number of shares constituting each class or series of preferred stock and the preferences, conversion or other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends, qualifications or terms and conditions of redemption as may be fixed by resolution of our board of directors or duly authorized committee thereof. Our preferred stock will, when issued in exchange for the consideration therefor, be fully paid and non-assessable and will not have, or be subject to, any preemptive or similar rights.

You should refer to the prospectus supplement relating to the class or series of preferred stock offered thereby for specific terms, including:

the class or series, title and stated value of that preferred stock;

the number of shares of that preferred stock offered, the liquidation preference per share and the offering price of that preferred stock;

the dividend rate(s), period(s) and/or payment date(s) or method(s) of calculation thereof applicable to that preferred stock;

whether dividends on that preferred stock shall be cumulative or not and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends on that preferred stock shall accumulate;

the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any, for that preferred stock;

provisions for a sinking fund, if any, for that preferred stock;

any listing of that preferred stock on any securities exchange;

the terms and conditions, if applicable, upon which that preferred stock will be convertible into our common stock, including the conversion price (or manner of calculation thereof);

any voting rights;

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the relative ranking and preference of that preferred stock as to distribution rights and rights upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up if other than as described in this prospectus;

any limitations on issuance of any other series of preferred stock ranking senior to or on a parity with that preferred stock as to distribution rights and rights upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up;

a discussion of certain federal income tax considerations applicable to that preferred stock;

any limitations on actual, beneficial or constructive ownership and restrictions on transfer of that preferred stock and, if convertible, the related common stock, in each case as may be appropriate to preserve our status as a REIT; and

any other material terms, preferences, rights, limitations or restrictions of that preferred stock.

Rank

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, the preferred stock will, with respect to the rights to the payment of dividends and distribution of our assets and rights upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, rank:

senior to all classes or series of our common stock and to all of our equity securities the terms of which provide that those equity securities are junior to the preferred stock;

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junior to all of our equity securities the terms of which provide that those equity securities will rank senior to it; and

on a parity with all of our equity securities other than those referred to in the two immediately preceding clauses.

For these purposes, the term equity securities does not include convertible debt securities.

Dividends

Holders of shares of our preferred stock of each class or series shall be entitled to receive, when, as an if authorized by our board of directors and declared by us, out of our assets legally available for payment, cash dividends at rates and on dates as will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Each dividend shall be payable to holders of record as they appear on our stock transfer books on the record dates as shall be fixed by our board of directors.

Dividends on any class or series of our preferred stock may be cumulative or non-cumulative, as provided in the applicable prospectus supplement. Dividends, if cumulative, will accumulate from and after the date set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. If our board of directors fails to authorize a dividend payable on a dividend payment date on any class or series of our preferred stock for which dividends are non-cumulative, then the holders of that class or series of our preferred stock will have no right to receive a dividend in respect of the dividend period ending on that dividend payment date, and we will have no obligation to pay the dividend accrued for that period, whether or not dividends on that class or series are payable on any future dividend payment date.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, if any shares of our preferred stock of any class or series are outstanding, no full dividends shall be authorized or paid or set apart for payment on our preferred stock of any other class or series ranking, as to dividends, on a parity with or junior to our preferred stock of that class or series of any period unless:

if that class or series of our preferred stock has a cumulative dividend, full cumulative dividends have been or contemporaneously are authorized and paid or authorized and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart for that payment on our preferred stock of that class or series for all past dividend periods; or

if that class or series of our preferred stock does not have a cumulative dividend, full dividends for the then current dividend period have been or contemporaneously are authorized and paid or authorized and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart for that payment on our preferred stock of that class or series.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, when dividends are not paid in full (or a sum sufficient for their full payment is not so set apart) upon the shares of our preferred stock of any class or series and the shares of any other class or series of our preferred stock ranking on a parity as to dividends with our preferred stock of that class or series, all dividends declared upon shares of our preferred stock of that class or series and any other class or series of our preferred stock ranking on a parity as to dividends with our preferred stock of that class or series and that other class or series of our preferred stock shall in all cases bear to each other the same ratio that accrued and unpaid dividends per share on the shares of our preferred stock of that class or series (which shall not include any accumulation in respect of unpaid dividends for prior dividend periods if our preferred stock does not have a cumulative dividend) and that other class or series of our preferred stock bear to each other. No interest, or sum of money in lieu of interest, shall be payable in respect of any dividend payment or payments on our preferred stock of that series that may be in arrears.

Except as provided in the immediately preceding paragraph or as otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, unless: (1) if that class or series of our preferred stock has a cumulative dividend, full

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cumulative dividends on our preferred stock of that class or series have been or contemporaneously are authorized and paid or authorized and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart for payment for all past dividend periods and the then current dividend period; and (2) if that class or series of our preferred stock does not have a cumulative dividend, full dividends on our preferred stock of that class or series have been or contemporaneously are authorized and paid or authorized and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set aside for payment for the then current dividend period, then no dividends (other than in our common stock or other stock ranking junior to our preferred stock of that class or series as to dividends and upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up) shall be authorized or paid or set aside for payment or other distribution shall be authorized or made upon our common stock or any of our other stock ranking junior to or on a parity with our preferred stock of that class or series as to dividends or upon liquidation, nor shall any of our common stock or any of our other stock ranking junior to or on a parity with our preferred stock of such class or series as to dividends or upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up be redeemed, purchased or otherwise acquired for any consideration (or any moneys be paid to or made available for a sinking fund for the redemption of any shares of that stock) by us (except by conversion into or exchange for other of our stock ranking junior to our preferred stock of that class or series as to dividends and upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up).

Any dividend payment made on shares of a class or series of our preferred stock shall first be credited against the earliest accrued but unpaid dividend due with respect to shares of that class or series which remains payable.

Redemption

If the applicable prospectus supplements so states, shares of our preferred stock will be subject to mandatory redemption or redemption at our option, in whole or in part, in each case on the terms, at the times and at the redemption prices set forth in that prospectus supplement.

The prospectus supplement relating to a class or series of our preferred stock that is subject to mandatory redemption will specify the number of shares of that preferred stock that shall be redeemed by us in each year commencing after a date to be specified, at a redemption price per share to be specified, together with an amount equal to all accrued and unpaid dividends thereon (which shall not, if that preferred stock does not have a cumulative dividend, include any accumulation in respect of unpaid dividends for prior dividend periods) to the date of redemption. The redemption price may be payable in cash or other property, as specified in the applicable prospectus supplement. If the redemption price for any series of our preferred stock is payable only from the net proceeds of the issuance of our stock, the terms of that preferred stock may provide that, if no such stock shall have been issued or to the extent the net proceeds from any issuance are insufficient to pay in full the aggregate redemption price then due, that preferred stock shall automatically and mandatorily be converted into shares of our applicable stock pursuant to conversion provisions specified in the prospectus supplement.

Notwithstanding the foregoing and except as otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, unless:

if that class or series of our preferred stock has a cumulative dividend, full cumulative dividends have been or contemporaneously are authorized and paid or authorized and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart for that payment on our preferred stock of that class or series for all past dividend periods; or

if that class or series of our preferred stock does not have a cumulative dividend, full dividends on our preferred stock of any class or series have been or contemporaneously are authorized and paid or authorized and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart for payment for the then current dividend period;

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no shares of any class or series of our preferred stock shall be redeemed unless all outstanding shares of our preferred stock of that class or series are simultaneously redeemed; provided, however, that the foregoing shall

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not prevent the purchase or acquisition of shares of our preferred stock of that class or series pursuant to a purchase or exchange offer made on the same terms to holders of all outstanding shares of our preferred stock of that class or series.

If fewer than all of the outstanding shares of our preferred stock of any class or series are to be redeemed, the number of shares to be redeemed will be determined by us and those shares may be redeemed pro rata from the holders of record of those shares in proportion to the number of those shares held by those holders (with adjustments to avoid redemption of fractional shares) or any other equitable method determined by us that will not result in the issuance of any excess shares of our preferred stock.

Notice of redemption will be mailed at least 30 days but not more than 60 days before the redemption date to each holder of record of a share of our preferred stock of any class or series to be redeemed at the address shown on our stock transfer books. Each notice shall state:

the redemption date;

the number of shares and class or series of our preferred stock to be redeemed;

the redemption price;

the place or places where certificates for that preferred stock are to be surrendered for payment of the redemption price;

that dividends on the shares to be redeemed will cease to accrue on that redemption date; and

the date on which the holder's conversion rights, if any, to those shares shall terminate.

If fewer than all the shares of our preferred stock of any class or series are to be redeemed, the notice mailed to each holder thereof shall also specify the number of shares of our preferred stock to be redeemed from each holder. If notice of redemption of any shares of our preferred stock has been given and if the funds necessary for that redemption have been set apart by us in trust for the benefit of the holders of any shares of our preferred stock so called for redemption, then from and after the redemption date dividends will cease to accrue on those shares of our preferred stock, those shares of our preferred stock shall no longer be deemed outstanding and all rights of the holders of those shares will terminate, except the right to receive the redemption price.

Liquidation Preference

Upon our voluntary or involuntary liquidation, dissolution or winding up, then, before any distribution or payment shall be made to the holders of any common stock or any other class or series of our stock ranking junior to that class or series of our preferred stock in the distribution of assets upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of each class or series of our preferred stock shall be entitled to receive out of our assets legally available for distribution to stockholders liquidating distributions in the amount of the liquidation preference per share (set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement), plus an amount equal to all dividends accrued and unpaid thereon (which shall not include any accumulation in respect of unpaid dividends for prior dividend periods if that class or series of our preferred stock does not have a cumulative dividend). After payment of the full amount of the liquidating distributions to which they are entitled, the holders of that class or series of our

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preferred stock will have no right or claim to any of our remaining assets. If, upon our voluntary or involuntary liquidation, dissolution or winding up, our legally available assets are insufficient to pay the amount of the liquidating distributions on all outstanding shares of that class or series of our preferred stock and the corresponding amounts payable on all shares of other classes or series of our stock ranking on a parity with that class or series of our preferred stock in the distribution of assets upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, then the holders of that class or series of our preferred stock and all other classes or series of our stock shall share ratably in that distribution of assets in proportion to the full liquidating distributions to which they would otherwise be respectively entitled.

If liquidating distributions shall have been made in full to all holders of shares of that class or series of our preferred stock, our remaining assets shall be distributed among the holders of any other classes or series of our

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stock ranking junior to that class or series of our preferred stock upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, according to their respective rights and preferences and in each case according to their respective number of shares. For those purposes, neither our consolidation nor merger with or into any other corporation, trust or other entity nor the sale, lease, transfer or conveyance of all or substantially all of our property or business shall be deemed to constitute our liquidation, dissolution or winding up.

Voting Rights

Except as set forth below or as otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of our preferred stock will not have any voting rights.

Whenever dividends on any shares of that class or series of our preferred stock shall be in arrears for 18 months or six or more quarterly periods, the holders of those shares of that class or series of our preferred stock (voting separately as a class with all other classes or series of our preferred stock ranking on parity with such class or series of our preferred stock upon which like voting rights have been conferred and are exercisable) will be entitled to vote for the election of two additional directors to our board of directors (and our entire board of directors will be increased by two directors) at a special meeting called by one of our officers at the request of a holder of that class or series of our preferred stock or, if that special meeting is not called by that officer within 30 days, at a special meeting called by a holder of that class or series of our preferred stock designated by the holders of record of at least 10% of the shares of any of those classes or series of our preferred stock (unless that request is received less than 90 days before the date fixed for the next annual or special meeting of the stockholders), or at the next annual meeting of stockholders, and at each subsequent annual meeting until:

if that class or series of our preferred stock has a cumulative dividend, then all dividends accumulated on those shares of our preferred stock for the past dividend periods and the then current dividend period shall have been fully paid or declared and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart for payment, or

if that class or series of our preferred stock does not have a cumulative dividend, then four consecutive quarterly periods of dividends shall have been fully paid or declared and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart for payment.

Unless provided otherwise in any prospectus supplements for any series of our preferred stock, so long as any shares of our preferred stock remain outstanding, we shall not, without the affirmative vote or consent of the holders of at least two-thirds of the shares of each class or series of our preferred stock outstanding at the time, given in person or by proxy, either in writing or at a meeting (that class or series voting separately as a class):

authorize or create, or increase the authorized or issued amount of, any class or series of our stock ranking senior to that class or series of our preferred stock with respect to payment of dividends or the distribution of assets upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up or reclassify any of our authorized stock into those shares, or create, authorize or issue any obligation or security convertible into or evidencing the right to purchase those shares; or

amend, alter or repeal the provisions of the charter in respect of that class or series of our preferred stock, whether by merger, consolidation or otherwise, so as to materially and adversely affect any right, preference, privilege or voting power of that class or series of our preferred stock; provided, however, that any increase in the number of authorized shares of any class or series of our preferred stock issued and outstanding at the time of such amendment, alteration or repeal or any increase in the amount of the authorized shares of our preferred stock or the creation or issuance of any other class or series of our preferred stock, or any increase in the number of authorized shares of that class or series, in each case ranking on a parity with or junior to our preferred stock of that

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class or series with respect to payment of dividends and the distribution of assets upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up, shall not be deemed to materially and adversely affect those rights, preferences, privileges or voting powers; and provided, further, that that any merger, consolidation or transfer of all or substantially all of our assets, so long as

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either: (i) we are the surviving entity and such class or series of our preferred stock remains outstanding on the same terms, or (ii) the resulting, surviving or transferee entity is a corporation, business trust or other like entity organized under the laws any of any state and substitutes for such class or series of our preferred stock other preferred stock having substantially the same terms and same rights as such class or series of our preferred stock, including with respect to dividends, voting rights and rights upon liquidation, dissolution or winding-up, shall not be deemed to materially and adversely affect those rights, preferences, privileges or voting powers.

The foregoing voting provisions will not apply if, at or prior to the time when the act with respect to which that vote would otherwise be required shall be effected, all outstanding shares of that class or series of our preferred stock shall have been redeemed or called for redemption upon proper notice and sufficient funds shall have been irrevocably deposited in trust to effect that redemption.

Conversion Rights

The terms and conditions, if any, upon which shares of any class or series of our preferred stock are convertible into our common stock, debt securities or another series of our preferred stock will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement relating thereto. Such terms will include the number of shares of our common stock or those other series of our preferred stock or the principal amount of debt securities into which our preferred stock is convertible, the conversion price (or manner of calculation thereof), the conversion period, provisions as to whether conversion will be at our option or at the option of the holders of that class or series of our preferred stock, the events requiring an adjustment of the conversion price and provisions affecting conversion in the event of the redemption of that class or series of our preferred stock.

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DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

We may offer fractional shares of our preferred stock rather than full shares of our preferred stock, and, in that event, we will issue receipts for depositary shares. Each of these depositary shares will represent a fraction, which will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, of a share of the applicable series of our preferred stock.

The shares of any series of our preferred stock underlying any depositary shares that we may sell under this prospectus will be deposited under a deposit agreement between us and a depositary selected by us. Subject to the terms of the deposit agreement, each holder of a depositary share will be entitled, in proportion to the applicable fraction of a share of our preferred stock underlying the depositary shares, to all of the rights, preferences and privileges, and be subject to the qualifications and restrictions, of our preferred stock underlying the depositary share.

The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued under a deposit agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to the holders of the depositary shares that are sold in the applicable offering. A deposit agreement, including a depositary receipt, for any depositary shares that we sell under this prospectus will be incorporated by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. The following description of material terms of the deposit agreement, the depositary shares and the depositary receipts is only a summary. The terms of any deposit agreement may differ from the terms we describe below. We urge you to read the prospectus supplements relating to any depositary shares that are sold under this prospectus, as well as the complete deposit agreement and depositary receipt.

Form

Pending the preparation of definitive depositary receipts, the depositary may, upon our written order, issue temporary depositary receipts substantially identical to the definitive depositary receipts but not in definitive form. These temporary depositary receipts entitle their holders to all of the rights of definitive depositary receipts. Temporary depositary receipts will then be exchangeable for definitive receipts at our expense.

Dividends and Other Distributions

The depositary will distribute all cash dividends or other cash distributions received with respect to the underlying preferred stock to the record holders of depositary shares in proportion to the number of depositary shares owned by those holders.

If there is a distribution other than in cash, the depositary will distribute property received by it to the record holders of depositary shares in proportion to the number of depositary shares owned by those holders, unless the depositary determines that it is not feasible to do so. If this occurs, the depositary may, with our approval, sell the property and distribute the net proceeds from the sale to those holders in proportion to the number of depositary shares owned by them.

Withdrawal of Underlying Preferred Stock

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Except as otherwise provided in a prospectus supplement, holders may surrender depositary receipts at the principal office of the depositary and, upon payment of any unpaid amount due to the depositary, be entitled to receive the number of whole shares of underlying preferred stock and all money and other property represented by the related depositary shares. We will not issue any partial shares of our preferred stock. If the holder delivers depositary receipts evidencing a number of depositary shares that represent more than a whole number of shares of our preferred stock, the depositary will issue a new depositary receipt evidencing the excess number of depositary shares to the holder.

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Redemption of Depositary Shares

If our preferred stock underlying any depositary shares we may sell under this prospectus is subject to redemption, the depositary shares will be redeemed from the proceeds received by the depositary resulting from any such redemption, in whole or in part, of that underlying preferred stock. The redemption price per depositary share will be equal to the applicable fraction of the redemption price per share payable with respect to the underlying preferred stock. Whenever we redeem shares of underlying preferred stock that are held by the depositary, the depositary will redeem, as of the same redemption date, the number of depositary shares representing the shares of underlying preferred stock so redeemed. If fewer than all of the depositary shares are to be redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by lot or proportionately, as may be determined by the depositary.

Voting

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which holders of our preferred stock underlying any depositary shares that we may sell under this prospectus are entitled to vote, the depositary will mail the information contained in the notice to the record holders of the depositary shares. Each record holder of the depositary shares on the record date, which will be the same date as the record date for the underlying preferred stock, will be entitled to instruct the depositary as to the exercise of the voting rights pertaining to the amount of the underlying preferred stock represented by the holder's depositary shares. The depositary will then try, as far as practicable, to vote the number of shares of our preferred stock underlying those depositary shares in accordance with those instructions, and we will agree to take all reasonable actions which may be deemed necessary by the depositary to enable the depositary to do so. The depositary will not vote the underlying preferred stock to the extent it does not receive specific instructions with respect to the depositary shares representing such preferred stock.

Conversion of Preferred Stock

If the prospectus supplement relating to any depositary shares that we may sell under this prospectus states that the underlying preferred stock is convertible into our common stock or other securities, the following will apply. The depositary shares, as such, will not be convertible into any of our securities. Rather, any holder of the depositary shares may surrender the related depositary receipts to the depositary with written instructions to instruct us to cause conversion of our preferred stock represented by the depositary shares into or for whole shares of our common stock or other securities, as applicable. Upon receipt of those instructions and any amounts payable by the holder in connection with the conversion, we will cause the conversion using the same procedures as those provided for conversion of the underlying preferred stock. If only some of a holder's depositary shares are converted, a new depositary receipt or receipts will be issued to the holder for any depositary shares not converted.

Amendment and Termination of the Deposit Agreement

The form of depositary receipt evidencing the depositary shares and any provision of the deposit agreement may at any time be amended by agreement between us and the depositary. However, any amendment which materially and adversely alters the rights of the holders of depositary shares will not be effective until 90 days after notice of that amendment has been given to the holders. Each holder of depositary shares at the time any amendment becomes effective shall be deemed to consent and agree to that amendment and to be bound by the deposit agreement as so amended. The deposit agreement may be terminated by us or by the depositary only if all outstanding depositary shares have been redeemed or converted into any other securities into which the underlying preferred stock is convertible or there has been a final distribution, including to holders of depositary receipts, of the underlying preferred stock in connection with our liquidation, dissolution or winding up.

Charges of Depositary

We will pay all charges of the depositary, except for taxes and governmental charges and other charges as are expressly provided for in the deposit agreement to be for the account of the holders of depositary shares or persons other than ourselves who may deposit any underlying preferred stock with the depositary.

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Reports

The depositary will forward to holders of depositary receipts all notices and reports from us that we deliver to the depositary and that we are required to furnish to the holders of the underlying preferred stock.

Limitation on Liability

Neither we nor the depositary will be liable if either of us is prevented or delayed by law or any circumstance beyond our control in performing our respective obligations under the deposit agreement. Our obligations and those of the depositary will be limited to performance of our respective duties under the deposit agreement without, in our case, negligence or bad faith or, in the case of the depositary, negligence or willful misconduct. We and the depositary may rely upon advice of counsel or accountants, or upon information provided by persons presenting the underlying preferred stock for deposit, holders of depositary receipts or other persons believed by us in good faith to be competent and on documents believed to be genuine.

Resignation and Removal of Depositary

The depositary may resign at any time by delivering notice to us of its election to resign. We may remove the depositary at any time. Any resignation or removal will take effect upon the appointment of a successor depositary and its acceptance of the appointment. The successor depositary must be appointed within 60 days after delivery of the notice of resignation or removal and must be a bank or trust company having its principal office in the United States and having a combined capital and surplus of at least \$50 million.

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DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus. While the terms we have summarized below will generally apply to any future debt securities we may offer under this prospectus, we will describe the particular terms of any debt securities that we may offer in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any debt securities we offer under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms we describe below.

We will issue the senior notes under a senior indenture which we will enter into with the trustee named in the senior indenture. We will issue the subordinated notes under a subordinated indenture which we will enter into with the trustee named in the subordinated indenture. We have filed forms of these documents as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. The terms of any indenture that we enter into may differ from the terms we describe below. We use the term "indentures" to refer to both the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture.

The indentures will be qualified under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, or the Trust Indenture Act. We use the term "debenture trustee" to refer to either the senior trustee or the subordinated trustee, as applicable.

The following summaries of material provisions of the senior notes, the subordinated notes and the indentures are subject to, and qualified in their entirety by reference to, all the provisions of the indenture applicable to a particular series of debt securities. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplements related to the debt securities that we sell under this prospectus, as well as the complete indentures that contain the terms of the debt securities. Except as we may otherwise indicate, the terms of the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture are identical.

General

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms relating to a series of debt securities, including:

the title;

the principal amount being offered, and, if a series, the total amount authorized and the total amount outstanding;

any limit on the amount that may be issued;

whether or not we will issue the series of debt securities in global form and, if so, the terms and who the depository will be;

the maturity date;

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the principal amount due at maturity, and whether the debt securities will be issued with any original issue discount;

whether and under what circumstances, if any, we will pay additional amounts on any debt securities held by a person who is not a United States person for tax purposes, and whether we can redeem the debt securities if we have to pay such additional amounts;

the annual interest rate, which may be fixed or variable, or the method for determining the rate, the date interest will begin to accrue, the dates interest will be payable and the regular record dates for interest payment dates or the method for determining such dates;

whether or not the debt securities will be secured or unsecured, and the terms of any secured debt;

the terms of the subordination of any series of subordinated debt;

the place where payments will be payable;

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restrictions on transfer, sale or other assignment, if any;

our right, if any, to defer payment of interest and the maximum length of any such deferral period;

the date, if any, after which, the conditions upon which, and the price at which we may, at our option, redeem the series of debt securities pursuant to any optional or provisional redemption provisions, and any other applicable terms of those redemption provisions;

provisions for a sinking fund, purchase or other analogous fund, if any;

the date, if any, on which, and the price at which we are obligated, pursuant to any mandatory sinking fund or analogous fund provisions or otherwise, to redeem, or at the holder's option to purchase, the series of debt securities;

whether the indenture will restrict our ability and/or the ability of our subsidiaries to:

incur additional indebtedness;

issue additional securities;

create liens;

pay dividends and make distributions in respect of our capital stock and the capital stock of our subsidiaries;

redeem capital stock;

place restrictions on our subsidiaries' ability to pay dividends, make distributions or transfer assets;

make investments or other restricted payments;

sell or otherwise dispose of assets;

enter into sale-leaseback transactions;

engage in transactions with stockholders and affiliates;

issue or sell stock of our subsidiaries; or

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effect a consolidation or merger;

whether the indenture will require us to maintain any interest coverage, fixed charge, cash flow-based, asset-based or other financial ratios;

a discussion of any material or special United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the debt securities;

information describing any book-entry features;

the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any;

the denominations in which we will issue the series of debt securities, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof;

if other than dollars, the currency in which the series of debt securities will be denominated; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the debt securities, including any events of default that are in addition to those described in this prospectus or any covenants provided with respect to the debt securities that are in addition to those described above, and any terms which may be required by us or advisable under applicable laws or regulations or advisable in connection with the marketing of the debt securities.

Conversion or Exchange Rights

We will set forth in the prospectus supplement the terms on which a series of debt securities may be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or other securities of ours or a third party, including the conversion or exchange rate, as applicable, or how it will be calculated, and the applicable conversion or

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exchange period. We will include provisions as to whether conversion or exchange is mandatory, at the option of the holder or at our option. We may include provisions pursuant to which the number of our securities or the securities of a third party that the holders of the series of debt securities receive upon conversion or exchange would, under the circumstances described in those provisions, be subject to adjustment, or pursuant to which those holders would, under those circumstances, receive other property upon conversion or exchange, for example in the event of our merger or consolidation with another entity.

Consolidation, Merger or Sale

The indentures in the forms initially filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part do not contain any covenant which restricts our ability to merge or consolidate, or sell, convey, transfer or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of our assets. However, any successor of ours or acquiror of such assets must assume all of our obligations under the indentures and the debt securities.

If the debt securities are convertible for our other securities, the person with whom we consolidate or merge or to whom we sell all of our property must make provisions for the conversion of the debt securities into securities which the holders of the debt securities would have received if they had converted the debt securities before the consolidation, merger or sale.

Events of Default Under the Indenture

The following are events of default under the indentures with respect to any series of debt securities that we may issue:

if we fail to pay interest when due and payable and our failure continues for 90 days and the time for payment has not been extended or deferred;

if we fail to pay the principal, or premium, if any, when due and payable and the time for payment has not been extended or delayed;

if we fail to observe or perform any other covenant contained in the debt securities or the indentures, other than a covenant specifically relating to another series of debt securities, and our failure continues for 90 days after we receive notice from the debenture trustee or holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the applicable series; and

if specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occur.

If an event of default with respect to debt securities of any series occurs and is continuing, other than an event of default specified in the last bullet point above, the debenture trustee or the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series, by notice to us in writing, and to the debenture trustee if notice is given by such holders, may declare the unpaid principal of, premium, if any, and accrued interest, if any, due and payable immediately. If an event of default specified in the last bullet point above occurs with respect to us, the principal amount of and accrued interest, if any, of each issue of debt securities then outstanding shall be due and payable without any notice or other action on the part of the debenture trustee or any holder.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of an affected series may waive any default or event of default with respect to the series and its consequences, except defaults or events of default regarding payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, unless we have cured the default or event of default in accordance with the indenture.

Subject to the terms of the indentures, if an event of default under an indenture shall occur and be continuing, the debenture trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under such indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders of the applicable series of debt securities, unless such

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holders have offered the debenture trustee reasonable indemnity. The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the debenture trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the debenture trustee, with respect to the debt securities of that series, provided that:

the direction so given by the holder is not in conflict with any law or the applicable indenture; and

subject to its duties under the Trust Indenture Act, the debenture trustee need not take any action that might involve it in personal liability or might be unduly prejudicial to the holders not involved in the proceeding.

A holder of the debt securities of any series will only have the right to institute a proceeding under the indentures or to appoint a receiver or trustee, or to seek other remedies if:

the holder has given written notice to the debenture trustee of a continuing event of default with respect to that series;

the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request, and such holders have offered reasonable indemnity to the debenture trustee to institute the proceeding as trustee; and

the debenture trustee does not institute the proceeding, and does not receive from the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series other conflicting directions within 90 days after the notice, request and offer.

These limitations do not apply to a suit instituted by a holder of debt securities if we default in the payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on, the debt securities.

We will periodically file statements with the debenture trustee regarding our compliance with specified covenants in the indentures.

Modification of Indenture; Waiver

We and the debenture trustee may change an indenture without the consent of any holders with respect to specific matters, including:

to fix any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency in the indenture;

to comply with the provisions described above under Consolidation, Merger or Sale;

to comply with any requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission in connection with the qualification of any indenture under the Trust Indenture Act;

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to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment hereunder by a successor trustee;

to provide for uncertificated debt securities and to make all appropriate changes for such purpose;

to add to, delete from, or revise the conditions, limitations and restrictions on the authorized amount, terms or purposes of issuance, authorization and delivery of debt securities of any series;

to add to our covenants such new covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions for the protection of the holders, to make the occurrence, or the occurrence and the continuance, of a default in any such additional covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions an event of default, or to surrender any of our rights or powers under the indenture; or

to change anything that does not harm the interests of any holder of debt securities of any series.

In addition, under the indentures, the rights of holders of a series of debt securities may be changed by us and the debenture trustee with the written consent of the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal

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amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series that is affected. However, we and the debenture trustee may only make the following changes with the consent of each holder of any outstanding debt securities affected:

extending the fixed maturity of the series of debt securities;

reducing the principal amount, reducing the rate of or extending the time of payment of interest, or reducing any premium payable upon the redemption of any debt securities; or

reducing the percentage of debt securities, the holders of which are required to consent to any supplemental indenture.

Discharge

Each indenture provides that we can elect to be discharged from our obligations with respect to one or more series of debt securities, except for obligations to:

register the transfer or exchange of debt securities of the series;

replace stolen, lost or mutilated debt securities of the series;

maintain paying agencies;

hold monies for payment in trust;

recover excess money held by the debenture trustee;

compensate and indemnify the debenture trustee; and

appoint any successor trustee.

In order to exercise our rights to be discharged, we must deposit with the debenture trustee money or government obligations sufficient to pay all the principal of, any premium, if any, and interest on, the debt securities of the series on the dates payments are due.

Form, Exchange and Transfer

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We will issue the debt securities of each series only in fully registered form without coupons and, unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, in denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof. The indentures provide that we may issue debt securities of a series in temporary or permanent global form and as book-entry securities that will be deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company or another depository named by us and identified in a prospectus supplement with respect to that series. See Legal Ownership of Securities for a further description of the terms relating to any book-entry securities.

At the option of the holder, subject to the terms of the indentures and the limitations applicable to global securities described in the applicable prospectus supplement, the holder of the debt securities of any series can exchange the debt securities for other debt securities of the same series, in any authorized denomination and of like tenor and aggregate principal amount.

Subject to the terms of the indentures and the limitations applicable to global securities set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the debt securities may present the debt securities for exchange or for registration of transfer, duly endorsed or with the form of transfer endorsed thereon duly executed if so required by us or the security registrar, at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent designated by us for this purpose. Unless otherwise provided in the debt securities that the holder presents for transfer or exchange, we will make no service charge for any registration of transfer or exchange, but we may require payment of any taxes or other governmental charges.

We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement the security registrar, and any transfer agent in addition to the security registrar, that we initially designate for any debt securities. We may at any time designate

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additional transfer agents or rescind the designation of any transfer agent or approve a change in the office through which any transfer agent acts, except that we will be required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of each series.

If we elect to redeem the debt securities of any series, we will not be required to:

issue, register the transfer of, or exchange any debt securities of any series being redeemed in part during a period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before the day of mailing of a notice of redemption of any debt securities that may be selected for redemption and ending at the close of business on the day of the mailing; or

register the transfer of or exchange any debt securities so selected for redemption, in whole or in part, except the unredeemed portion of any debt securities we are redeeming in part.

Information Concerning the Debenture Trustee

The debenture trustee, other than during the occurrence and continuance of an event of default under an indenture, undertakes to perform only those duties as are specifically set forth in the applicable indenture. Upon an event of default under an indenture, the debenture trustee must use the same degree of care as a prudent person would exercise or use in the conduct of his or her own affairs. Subject to this provision, the debenture trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of the powers given it by the indentures at the request of any holder of debt securities unless it is offered reasonable security and indemnity against the costs, expenses and liabilities that it might incur.

Payment and Paying Agents

Unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make payment of the interest on any debt securities on any interest payment date to the person in whose name the debt securities, or one or more predecessor securities, are registered at the close of business on the regular record date for the interest.

We will pay principal of and any premium and interest on the debt securities of a particular series at the office of the paying agents designated by us, except that, unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may make interest payments by check which we will mail to the holder or by wire transfer to certain holders. Unless we otherwise indicate in a prospectus supplement, we will designate an office or agency of the debenture trustee in the city of New York as our sole paying agent for payments with respect to debt securities of each series. We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement any other paying agents that we initially designate for the debt securities of a particular series. We will maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of a particular series.

All money we pay to a paying agent or the debenture trustee for the payment of the principal of or any premium or interest on any debt securities which remains unclaimed at the end of two years after such principal, premium or interest has become due and payable will be repaid to us, and the holder of the debt security thereafter may look only to us for payment thereof.

Governing Law

The indentures and the debt securities will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, except to the extent that the Trust Indenture Act is applicable.

Subordination of Subordinated Debt Securities

The subordinated debt securities will be subordinate and junior in priority of payment to certain of our other indebtedness to the extent described in a prospectus supplement. The indentures in the forms initially filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part do not limit the amount of indebtedness which we may incur, including senior indebtedness or subordinated indebtedness, and do not limit us from issuing any other debt, including secured debt or unsecured debt.

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DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer under this prospectus, which consist of warrants to purchase our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares and/or debt securities in one or more series from time to time. We may issue warrants independently or together with our common stock, our preferred stock, our depositary shares and/or our debt securities offered by any prospectus supplement, and the warrants may be attached to or separate from those securities. While the terms we have summarized below will generally apply to any future warrants we may offer under this prospectus, we will describe the particular terms of any warrants that we may offer in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any warrants we offer under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms we describe below.

The warrants will be evidenced by warrant certificates issued under one or more warrant agreements, which are contracts between us and an agent selected by us for the holders of the warrants. We will file the warrant agreements and the related warrant certificates for each warrant we may offer under this prospectus as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We use the term *warrant agreement* to refer to any of these warrant agreements. We use the term *warrant agent* to refer to the warrant agent under any of these warrant agreements. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants and will not act as an agent for the holders or beneficial owners of the warrants.

The following summaries of material provisions of the warrants and the warrant agreements are subject to, and qualified in their entirety by reference to, all the provisions of the warrant agreement applicable to a particular series of warrants. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplements related to the warrants that we sell under this prospectus, as well as the complete warrant agreements that contain the terms of the warrants.

General

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms relating to a series of warrants. If warrants for the purchase of debt securities are offered, the prospectus supplement will describe the following terms, to the extent applicable:

the offering price and the aggregate number of warrants offered;

the currencies in which the warrants are being offered;

the designation, aggregate principal amount, currencies, denominations and terms of the series of debt securities that can be purchased if a holder exercises a warrant;

the designation and terms of any securities of debt securities with which the warrants are being offered and the number of warrants offered with each such debt security;

the date on and after which the holder of the warrants can transfer them separately from the related series of debt securities;

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the principal amount of the series of debt securities that can be purchased if a holder exercises a warrant and the price at which and currencies in which such principal amount may be purchased upon exercise;

the terms of any rights to redeem or call the warrants; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the warrants.

Warrants for the purchase of debt securities will be in registered form only.

If warrants for the purchase of our common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares are offered, the prospectus supplement will describe the following terms, to the extent applicable:

the offering price and the aggregate number of warrants offered;

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the total number of shares that can be purchased if a holder of the warrants exercises them and, in the case of warrants for our preferred stock or depositary shares, the designation, total number and terms of the series of our preferred stock that can be purchased upon exercise or that are underlying the depositary shares that can be purchased upon exercise;

the designation and terms of any series of our preferred stock or depositary shares with which the warrants are being offered and the number of warrants being offered with each share of our common stock, our preferred stock or our depositary shares;

the date on and after which the holder of the warrants can transfer them separately from the related common stock or series of preferred stock or depositary shares;

the number of shares of our common stock or our preferred stock or our depositary shares that can be purchased if a holder exercises the warrant and the price at which such common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares may be purchased upon exercise, including, if applicable, any provisions for changes to or adjustments in the exercise price and in the securities or other property receivable upon exercise;

the terms of any rights to redeem or call, or accelerate the expiration of, the warrants;

the date on which the right to exercise the warrants begins and the date on which that right expires;

federal income tax consequences of holding or exercising the warrants; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the warrants.

Warrants for the purchase of our common stock, our preferred stock or our depositary shares will be in registered form only.

A holder of warrant certificates may exchange them for new certificates of different denominations, present them for registration of transfer and exercise them at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement. Until any warrants to purchase debt securities are exercised, the holder of the warrants will not have any of the rights of holders of debt securities that can be purchased upon exercise, including any rights to receive payments of principal, premium or interest on the underlying debt securities or to enforce covenants in the applicable indenture. Until any warrants to purchase our common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares are exercised, holders of the warrants will not have any rights of holders of the underlying common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares, including any rights to receive dividends or to exercise any voting rights, except to the extent set forth under **Warrant Adjustments** below.

Exercise of Warrants

Each holder of a warrant is entitled to purchase the principal amount of our debt securities or number of shares of our common stock, our preferred stock or our depositary shares, as the case may be, at the exercise price described in the applicable prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the day when the right to exercise terminates (or a later date if we extend the time for exercise), unexercised warrants will become void.

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A holder of warrants may exercise them by following the general procedure outlined below:

delivering to the warrant agent the payment required by the applicable prospectus supplement to purchase the underlying security;

properly completing and signing the reverse side of the warrant certificate representing the warrants; and

delivering the warrant certificate representing the warrants to the warrant agent within five business days of the warrant agent receiving payment of the exercise price.

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If you comply with the procedures described above, your warrants will be considered to have been exercised when the warrant agent receives payment of the exercise price, subject to the transfer books for the securities issuable upon exercise of the warrant not being closed on such date. After you have completed those procedures and subject to the foregoing, we will, as soon as practicable, issue and deliver to you our debt securities, common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares that you purchased upon exercise. If you exercise fewer than all of the warrants represented by a warrant certificate, a new warrant certificate will be issued to you for the unexercised amount of warrants. Holders of warrants will be required to pay any tax or governmental charge that may be imposed in connection with transferring the underlying securities in connection with the exercise of the warrants.

Amendments and Supplements to the Warrant Agreements

We may amend or supplement a warrant agreement without the consent of the holders of the applicable warrants to cure ambiguities in the warrant agreement, to cure or correct a defective provision in the warrant agreement, or to provide for other matters under the warrant agreement that we and the warrant agent deem necessary or desirable, so long as, in each case, such amendments or supplements do not harm the interests of the holders of the warrants.

Warrant Adjustments

Unless the applicable prospectus supplement states otherwise, the exercise price of, and the number of securities covered by, a common stock warrant, preferred stock warrant or depositary share warrant will be adjusted proportionately if we subdivide or combine our common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares, as applicable. In addition, unless the prospectus supplement states otherwise, if we, without payment therefor:

issue capital stock or other securities convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or preferred stock, or any rights to subscribe for, purchase or otherwise acquire any of the foregoing, as a dividend or distribution to holders of our common stock or preferred stock;

pay any cash to holders of our common stock or preferred stock other than a cash dividend paid out of our current or retained earnings or other than in accordance with the terms of our preferred stock;

issue any evidence of our indebtedness or rights to subscribe for or purchase our indebtedness to holders of our common stock or preferred stock; or

issue our common stock or preferred stock or additional stock or other securities or property to holders of our common stock or preferred stock by way of spinoff, split-up, reclassification, combination of shares or similar corporate rearrangement,

then the holders of our common stock warrants, our preferred stock warrants and our depositary share warrants, as applicable, will be entitled to receive upon exercise of the warrants, in addition to the securities otherwise receivable upon exercise of the warrants and without paying any additional consideration, the amount of stock and other securities and property such holders would have been entitled to receive had they held our common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares, as applicable, issuable under the warrants on the dates on which holders of those securities received or became entitled to receive such additional stock and other securities and property.

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Except as stated above, the exercise price and number of securities covered by a common stock warrant, preferred stock warrant and depositary share warrant, and the amounts of other securities or property to be received, if any, upon exercise of those warrants, will not be adjusted or provided for if we issue those securities or any securities convertible into or exchangeable for those securities, or securities carrying the right to purchase those securities or securities convertible into or exchangeable for those securities.

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Holders of our common stock warrants, our preferred stock warrants and our depositary share warrants may have additional rights under the following circumstances:

certain reclassifications, capital reorganizations or changes of our common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares, as applicable;

certain share exchanges, mergers, or similar transactions involving us and which result in changes of our common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares, as applicable; or

certain sales or dispositions to another entity of all or substantially all of our property and assets.

If one of the above transactions occurs and holders of our common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares are entitled to receive stock, securities or other property with respect to or in exchange for their securities, the holders of our common stock warrants, preferred stock warrants and depositary share warrants then outstanding, as applicable, will be entitled to receive upon exercise of their warrants the kind and amount of shares of stock and other securities or property that they would have received upon the applicable transaction if they had exercised their warrants immediately before the transaction.

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LEGAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

We can issue securities in registered form or in the form of one or more global securities. We describe global securities in greater detail below. We refer to those persons who have securities registered in their own names on the books that we or any applicable trustee or depository or warrant agent maintain for this purpose as the holders of those securities. These persons are the legal holders of the securities. We refer to those persons who, indirectly through others, own beneficial interests in securities that are not registered in their own names, as indirect holders of those securities. As we discuss below, indirect holders are not legal holders, and investors in securities issued in book-entry form or in street name will be indirect holders.

Book-Entry Holders

We may issue securities in book-entry form only, as we will specify in the applicable prospectus supplement. This means securities may be represented by one or more global securities registered in the name of a financial institution that holds them as depository on behalf of other financial institutions that participate in the depository's book-entry system. These participating institutions, which are referred to as participants, in turn, hold beneficial interests in the securities on behalf of themselves or their customers.

Only the person in whose name a security is registered is recognized as the holder of that security. Global securities will be registered in the name of the depository. Consequently, for global securities, we will recognize only the depository as the holder of the securities, and we will make all payments on the securities to the depository. The depository passes along the payments it receives to its participants, which in turn pass the payments along to their customers who are the beneficial owners. The depository and its participants do so under agreements they have made with one another or with their customers; they are not obligated to do so under the terms of the securities.

As a result, investors in a global security will not own securities directly. Instead, they will own beneficial interests in a global security, through a bank, broker or other financial institution that participates in the depository's book-entry system or holds an interest through a participant. As long as the securities are issued in global form, investors will be indirect holders, and not holders, of the securities.

Street Name Holders

We may terminate a global security or issue securities that are not issued in global form. In these cases, investors may choose to hold their securities in their own names or in street name. Securities held by an investor in street name would be registered in the name of a bank, broker or other financial institution that the investor chooses, and the investor would hold only a beneficial interest in those securities through an account the investor maintains at that institution.

For securities held in street name, we or any applicable trustee or depository will recognize only the intermediary banks, brokers and other financial institutions in whose names the securities are registered as the holders of those securities, and we or any such trustee or depository will make all payments on those securities to them. These institutions pass along the payments they receive to their customers who are the beneficial owners, but only because they agree to do so in their customer agreements or because they are legally required to do so. Investors who hold securities in street name will be indirect holders, not holders, of those securities.

Legal Holders

Our obligations, as well as the obligations of any applicable trustee or third party employed by us or a trustee, run only to the legal holders of the securities. We do not have obligations to investors who hold beneficial interests in global securities, in street name or by any other indirect means. This will be the case whether an investor chooses to be an indirect holder of a security or has no choice because we are issuing the securities only in global form.

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For example, once we make a payment or give a notice to the holder, we have no further responsibility for the payment or notice even if that holder is required, under agreements with its participants or customers or by law, to pass it along to the indirect holders but does not do so. Similarly, we may want to obtain the approval of the holders to amend an indenture, to relieve us of the consequences of a default or of our obligation to comply with a particular provision of an indenture, or for other purposes. In such an event, we would seek approval only from the holders, and not the indirect holders, of the securities. Whether and how the holders contact the indirect holders is up to the holders.

Special Considerations For Indirect Holders

If you hold securities through a bank, broker or other financial institution, either in book-entry form because the securities are represented by one or more global securities or in street name, you should check with your own institution to find out:

how it handles securities payments and notices;

whether it imposes fees or charges;

how it would handle a request for the holders' consent, if ever required;

whether and how you can instruct it to send you securities registered in your own name so you can be a holder, if that is permitted in the future;

how it would exercise rights under the securities if there were a default or other event triggering the need for holders to act to protect their interests; and

if the securities are global securities, how the depository's rules and procedures will affect these matters.

Global Securities

A global security is a security which represents one or any other number of individual securities held by a depository. Generally, all securities represented by the same global securities will have the same terms.

Each security issued in book-entry form will be represented by a global security that we issue to, deposit with and register in the name of a financial institution or its nominee that we select. The financial institution that we select for this purpose is called the depository. Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, The Depository Trust Company, New York, New York, known as DTC, will be the depository for all global securities issued under this prospectus.

A global security may not be transferred to or registered in the name of anyone other than the depository, its nominee or a successor depository, unless special termination situations arise. We describe those situations below under **Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be**

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Terminated. As a result of these arrangements, the depositary, or its nominee, will be the sole registered owner and holder of all securities represented by a global security, and investors will be permitted to own only beneficial interests in a global security. Beneficial interests must be held by means of an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that in turn has an account with the depositary or with another institution that does. Thus, an investor whose security is represented by a global security will not be a holder of the security, but only an indirect holder of a beneficial interest in the global security. If the prospectus supplement for a particular security indicates that the security will be issued as a global security, then the security will be represented by a global security at all times unless and until the global security is terminated. If termination occurs, we may issue the securities through another book-entry clearing system or decide that the securities may no longer be held through any book-entry clearing system.

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Special Considerations For Global Securities

As an indirect holder, an investor's rights relating to a global security will be governed by the account rules of the investor's financial institution and of the depository, as well as general laws relating to securities transfers. We do not recognize an indirect holder as a holder of securities and instead deal only with the depository that holds the global security.

If securities are issued only as a global security, an investor should be aware of the following:

An investor cannot cause the securities to be registered in the investor's name, and cannot obtain non-global certificates for the investor's interest in the securities, except in the special situations we describe below;

An investor will be an indirect holder and must look to the investor's own bank or broker for payments on the securities and protection of the investor's legal rights relating to the securities, as we describe above;

An investor may not be able to sell interests in the securities to some insurance companies and to other institutions that are required by law to own their securities in non-book-entry form;

An investor may not be able to pledge the investor's interest in the global security in circumstances where certificates representing the securities must be delivered to the lender or other beneficiary of the pledge in order for the pledge to be effective;

The depository's policies, which may change from time to time, will govern payments, transfers, exchanges and other matters relating to an investor's interest in the global security. We and any applicable trustee have no responsibility for any aspect of the depository's actions or for its records of ownership interests in the global security. We and the trustee also do not supervise the depository in any way;

The depository may, and we understand that DTC will, require that those who purchase and sell interests in the global security within its book-entry system use immediately available funds, and your broker or bank may require you to do so as well; and

Financial institutions that participate in the depository's book-entry system, and through which an investor holds its interest in the global security, may also have their own policies affecting payments, notices and other matters relating to the securities. There may be more than one financial intermediary in the chain of ownership for an investor. We do not monitor and are not responsible for the actions of any of those intermediaries.

Special Situations When A Global Security Will Be Terminated

In a few special situations described below, a global security will terminate and interests in it will be exchanged for physical certificates representing those interests. After that exchange, the choice of whether to hold securities directly or in street name will be up to the investor. Investors must consult their own banks or brokers to find out how to have their interests in securities transferred to their own name, so that they will be direct holders. We have described the rights of holders and street name investors above.

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A global security will terminate when the following special situations occur:

if the depositary notifies us that it is unwilling, unable or no longer qualified to continue as depositary for that global security and we do not appoint another institution to act as depositary within 90 days;

if we notify any applicable trustee that we wish to terminate that global security; or

if an event of default has occurred with regard to securities represented by that global security and has not been cured or waived.

The prospectus supplement may also list additional situations for terminating a global security that would apply only to the particular series of securities covered by the prospectus supplement. When a global security terminates, the depositary, and not we or any applicable trustee, is responsible for deciding the names of the institutions that will be the initial direct holders.

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MATERIAL U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following general discussion summarizes the material U.S. federal income tax considerations regarding our qualification and taxation as a REIT and material U.S. federal income tax consequences of an investment in our common stock. This discussion is based on interpretations of the Code, regulations issued thereunder, and rulings and decisions currently in effect (or in some cases proposed), all of which are subject to change. Any such change may be applied retroactively and may adversely affect the federal income tax consequences described herein. This summary addresses only investors that beneficially own shares of our common stock as capital assets. This summary does not discuss all of the tax consequences that may be relevant to particular stockholders or to stockholders subject to special treatment under the federal income tax laws, such as:

financial institutions or insurance companies;

mutual funds;

tax exempt organizations;

insurance companies;

dealers or brokers in securities or foreign currencies;

traders in securities that elect to apply a mark to market method of accounting;

foreign holders;

persons that hold their shares as part of a hedge against currency risk, appreciated financial positions, straddle, constructive sale or conversion transaction;

holders that acquired their shares as part of a hedge against currency risk, appreciated financial position, straddle, constructive sale or conversion transaction; or

entities treated as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes and partners in such entities.

Accordingly, stockholders are urged to consult their tax advisors with respect to the U.S. federal, state and local tax consequences of owning shares, as well as any consequences arising under the laws of any other taxing jurisdiction to which they may be subject.

O Melveny & Myers LLP has reviewed the discussion set forth below and is of the opinion that the statements made in this discussion, to the extent such statements summarize material U.S. federal tax consequences of the beneficial ownership of our common stock, are correct in all material respects. The opinion of O Melveny & Myers LLP has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part. O Melveny & Myers LLP's opinion is based on various assumptions, including that certain factual representations and covenants made by

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one of our officers are and remain accurate; moreover, the opinion is subject to limitations, and is not binding on the IRS or any court. The IRS may challenge the opinion of O Melveny & Myers LLP, and such a challenge could be successful.

We urge you to consult your own tax advisor regarding the specific tax consequences to you of ownership of shares of our common stock and of our election to be taxed as a REIT. Specifically, you should consult your own tax advisor regarding the federal, state, local, foreign, and other tax consequences of your stock ownership and our REIT election, and regarding potential changes in applicable tax laws.

Taxation as a REIT

General

We will elect to be taxed as a REIT under Sections 856 through 859 of the Code for our taxable year ended December 31, 2004. A REIT generally is not subject to federal income tax on the income that it distributes to stockholders if it meets the applicable REIT distribution requirements and other requirements for qualification as

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a REIT. We intend to be organized and to operate in such a manner as to qualify for taxation as a REIT. However, no assurance can be given that we will operate in a manner so as to qualify or remain qualified as a REIT.

We have received an opinion of O Melveny & Myers LLP, filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, to the effect that we satisfied the requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT under the Code for our taxable year ended December 31, 2004, and our organization and proposed method of operation will enable us to satisfy the requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT under the Code for our taxable year ending December 31, 2005, and each taxable year thereafter. It must be emphasized, however, that the opinion of O Melveny & Myers LLP will be based on various assumptions related to our organization and proposed operations and will be conditioned on representations and covenants made by our management regarding our organization, assets, sources of gross income and other matters related to the conduct of our business operations.

Qualification and taxation as a REIT depends upon our ability to meet on a continuing basis, through actual annual (or in some cases quarterly) operating results, various requirements under the Code, with regard to, among other things, the sources of our gross income, the composition and values of our assets, our distribution levels, and the diversity of ownership of our stock. O Melveny & Myers LLP will not review our compliance with the requirements on a continuing basis. Our ability to satisfy the asset and gross income tests applicable to a REIT depends, among other things, on the fair market values of our assets and the fair market value of the real estate that is collateral for our mortgage loans. Such values may not be susceptible to a precise determination. While we intend to operate so that we will qualify as a REIT, given the highly complex nature of the rules governing REITs, the ongoing importance of factual determinations, and the possibility of future changes in circumstances, no assurance can be given by O Melveny & Myers LLP or by us that we will so qualify for any particular year. For a discussion of the tax consequences of the failure to qualify as a REIT, see Failure to Qualify.

The sections of the Code and the corresponding regulations that govern the federal income tax treatment of a REIT and its stockholders are highly technical and complex. The following discussion is qualified in its entirety by the applicable Code provisions, rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, and administrative interpretations thereof.

In any year in which we qualify for taxation as a REIT, we generally will not be subject to federal corporate income taxes on that portion of our REIT taxable income that we distribute currently to our stockholders. However, our stockholders will generally be taxed on dividends that they receive at ordinary income rates unless such dividends are designated by us as capital gain dividends or qualified dividend income. This differs from non-REIT C corporations, which generally are subject to federal corporate income taxes but whose domestic noncorporate stockholders are generally taxed on dividends they receive at the 15% rate on qualified dividend income, and whose corporate stockholders generally receive the benefit of a dividends received deduction that substantially reduces the effective rate that they pay on such dividends. In general, income earned by a REIT and distributed to its stockholders will be subject to less federal income taxation than if such income were earned by a non-REIT C corporation, subjected to corporate income tax, and then distributed and taxed to stockholders.

While we are generally not subject to corporate income taxes on income that we distribute currently to our stockholders, we will be subject to federal tax as follows:

We will be taxed at regular corporate rates on any taxable income, including net capital gain, that we do not distribute to our stockholders during, or within a specified time period after, the calendar year in which the income is earned.

Under some circumstances, we may be subject to the alternative minimum tax due to our undistributed items of tax preference and alternative minimum tax adjustments.

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If we have net income from the sale or other disposition of foreclosure property that is held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business, or other non-qualifying income from foreclosure property, we will be subject to tax at the highest corporate rate on this income.

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Our income from prohibited transactions will be subject to a 100% tax. In general, prohibited transactions are sales or other dispositions of property, other than foreclosure property, held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business.

If we fail to satisfy either the 75% gross income test or the 95% gross income test discussed below, but nonetheless maintain our qualification as a REIT because other requirements are met, we will be subject to a tax equal to the gross income attributable to the greater of either (i) the amount by which 75% of our gross income exceeds the amount qualifying under the 75% gross income test for the taxable year or (ii) the amount by which 90% (95% in taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005) of our gross income exceeds the amount of our income qualifying under the 95% gross income test for the taxable year, multiplied in either case by a fraction intended to reflect our profitability.

We will be subject to a 4% nondeductible excise tax on the excess of the required distribution over the sum of the amounts actually distributed and amounts retained for which federal income tax was paid, if we fail to distribute during each calendar year at least the sum of:

85% of our REIT ordinary income for the year;

95% of our REIT capital gain net income for the year; and

any undistributed taxable income from prior taxable years, over excess distributions made with respect to prior years.

We may elect to retain and pay income tax on our net capital gain. In that case, a U.S. holder would include its proportionate share of our undistributed capital gain (to the extent we made a timely designation of such gain to the stockholder) in its income, would be deemed to have paid the tax that we paid on such gain and would be allowed a credit for its proportionate share of the tax deemed to have been paid and an adjustment would be made to increase the basis of the U.S. holder in our stock.

We will be subject to a 100% penalty tax on certain amounts received by us (or on certain expenses deducted by a taxable REIT subsidiary) if certain arrangements between us and a taxable REIT subsidiary, as further described below, are not comparable to similar arrangements between unrelated parties.

If we own a residual interest in a real estate mortgage investment conduit, or REMIC, we will be taxed at the highest corporate rate on the portion of any excess inclusion income, or phantom taxable income, that we derive from REMIC residual interests equal to the percentage of our stock that is held by disqualified organizations. Similar rules may apply if we own all of the equity interests in a taxable mortgage pool. To the extent that we own a REMIC residual interest or a taxable mortgage pool through a taxable REIT subsidiary, we will not be subject to this tax. For a discussion of excess inclusion income, see Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs. A disqualified organization includes:

the United States;

any state or political subdivision of the United States;

any foreign government;

any international organization;

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any agency or instrumentality of any of the foregoing;

any other tax-exempt organization, other than a farmer's cooperative described in section 521 of the Code, that is exempt both from income taxation and from taxation under the unrelated business taxable income provisions of the Code; and

any rural electrical or telephone cooperative.

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For this reason, our charter prohibits disqualified organizations from owning our shares.

If we acquire any assets from a non-REIT C corporation in a carry-over basis transaction, we could be liable for specified tax liabilities inherited from that non-REIT C corporation with respect to that corporation's built-in gain in its assets. Built-in gain is the amount by which an asset's fair market value exceeds its adjusted tax basis at the time we acquire the asset. Applicable Treasury regulations, however, allow us to avoid the recognition of gain and the imposition of corporate level tax with respect to a built-in gain asset acquired in a carry-over basis transaction from a non-REIT C corporation unless and until we dispose of that built-in gain asset during the 10-year period following its acquisition, at which time we would recognize, and would be subject to tax at the highest regular corporate rate on, the built-in gain.

In addition, notwithstanding our status as a REIT, we may also have to pay certain state and local income taxes, because not all states and localities treat REITs in the same manner that they are treated for federal income tax purposes. Moreover, as further described below, any taxable REIT subsidiary in which we own an interest, including New Century TRS and its subsidiaries, will be subject to federal corporate income tax on its taxable income.

Requirements for Qualification as a REIT

The Code defines a REIT as a corporation, trust or association:

- (1) that is managed by one or more trustees or directors;
- (2) the beneficial ownership of which is evidenced by transferable shares, or by transferable certificates of beneficial interest;
- (3) that would be taxable as a domestic corporation, but for Sections 856 through 859 of the Code;
- (4) that is neither a financial institution nor an insurance company subject to certain provisions of the Code;
- (5) the beneficial ownership of which is held by 100 or more persons;
- (6) of which not more than 50% in value of the outstanding shares are owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals (as defined in the Code to include certain entities) after applying certain attribution rules;
- (7) that makes an election to be a REIT for the current taxable year or has made such an election for a previous taxable year, which has not been terminated or revoked; and

(8) that meets other tests, described below, regarding the nature of its income and assets.

Conditions (1) through (4), inclusive, must be met during the entire taxable year. Condition (5) must be met during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months, or during a proportionate part of a taxable year of less than 12 months other than the first taxable year for which an election to become a REIT is made. Condition (6) must be met during the last half of each taxable year other than the first taxable year for which an election to become a REIT is made. For purposes of determining the ownership of shares under condition (6), a supplemental unemployment compensation benefits plan, a private foundation or a portion of a trust permanently set aside or used exclusively for charitable purposes generally is considered an individual. However, a trust that is a qualified trust under Section 401(a) of the Code generally is not considered an individual, and beneficiaries of a qualified trust are treated as holding shares of a REIT in proportion to their actuarial interests in the trust for purposes of condition (6). We believe that we have issued sufficient shares of stock with sufficient diversity of ownership to allow it to satisfy conditions (5) and (6) above. In addition, our charter contains restrictions regarding the transfer of our stock that are intended to assist us in continuing to satisfy the share ownership requirements described in (5) and (6) above. These restrictions, however, may not ensure that we will be able to satisfy these share ownership requirements. If we fail to satisfy these share ownership requirements, we will fail to qualify as a REIT.

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If we comply with regulatory rules pursuant to which we are required to send annual letters to holders of our stock requesting information regarding the actual ownership of our stock, and we do not know, or exercising reasonable diligence would not have known, whether we failed to meet requirement (6) above, we will be treated as having met the requirement.

In addition, we must satisfy all relevant filing and other administrative requirements established by the IRS that must be met to elect and maintain REIT status, use a calendar year for federal income tax purposes, and comply with the record keeping requirements of the Code and regulations promulgated thereunder.

Qualified REIT Subsidiaries

If a REIT owns a corporate subsidiary that is a qualified REIT subsidiary, the separate existence of that subsidiary is disregarded for federal income tax purposes. Generally, a qualified REIT subsidiary is a corporation, other than a taxable REIT subsidiary, all of the capital stock of which is owned by the REIT. All assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of the qualified REIT subsidiary will be treated as assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of the REIT itself. A qualified REIT subsidiary is not subject to federal corporate income taxation, although it may be subject to state and local taxation in some states.

Other Disregarded Entities and Partnerships

An unincorporated domestic entity, such as a partnership or limited liability company, which has a single owner generally is not treated as an entity separate from its parent for federal income tax purposes. If we own 100% of the interests of such an entity and such entity has not elected to be treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes, we will be treated as owning its assets and receiving its income directly. An unincorporated domestic entity with two or more owners generally is treated as a partnership for federal income tax purposes. In the case of a REIT that is a partner in a partnership that has other partners, the REIT is treated as owning its proportionate share of the assets of the partnership and as earning its proportionate share of the gross income of the partnership for purposes of the applicable REIT qualification tests. Thus, our proportionate share, based on percentage capital interests, of the assets, liabilities and items of income of any partnership, joint venture or limited liability company that is treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes in which we acquire an interest, directly or indirectly, will be treated as our assets and gross income for purposes of applying the various REIT qualification requirements.

Taxable REIT Subsidiaries

A taxable REIT subsidiary is an entity that is taxable as a corporation in which we directly or indirectly own stock and that elects with us to be treated as a taxable REIT subsidiary under the Code. In addition, if one of our taxable REIT subsidiaries owns, directly or indirectly, securities representing more than 35% of the vote or value of a subsidiary corporation, that subsidiary will also be treated as a taxable REIT subsidiary. However, an entity will not qualify as a taxable REIT subsidiary if it directly or indirectly operates or manages a lodging or health care facility or, generally, provides to another person, under a franchise, license or otherwise, rights to any brand name under which any lodging facility or health care facility is operated. We will have several direct and indirect subsidiaries, including New Century TRS. As taxable REIT subsidiaries, these entities will be subject to federal income tax, and state and local income tax where applicable, on their taxable income. To the extent that New Century TRS and its subsidiaries are required to pay taxes, they will have less cash available for distribution to us. If dividends are paid by these taxable REIT subsidiaries to us, then the dividends we pay to our non-corporate stockholders, up to the amount of dividends that we receive from our taxable REIT subsidiaries, will generally be eligible to be taxed at the reduced 15% rate applicable to qualified dividend income. See [Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Common Stock](#) [Qualified Dividend Income](#).

Income earned by a taxable REIT subsidiary is not attributable to the REIT. As a result, income that might not be qualifying income for purposes of the income tests applicable to REITs, such as fees from the origination

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and/or servicing of loans for third parties, could be earned by a taxable REIT subsidiary without affecting our status as a REIT. We expect to continue to sell all of our loans that we do not hold in our portfolio, and to perform other origination functions, through New Century TRS and its subsidiaries.

Several provisions of the Code regarding the arrangements between a REIT and its taxable REIT subsidiaries ensure that a taxable REIT subsidiary will be subject to an appropriate level of federal income taxation. For example, a taxable REIT subsidiary is limited in its ability to deduct interest payments made to its REIT parent. We currently do not anticipate that this limitation will apply to interest payments, if any, made by taxable REIT subsidiaries to us. In addition, we would be obligated to pay a 100% penalty tax on some payments that we receive from, or on certain expenses deducted by, our taxable REIT subsidiaries if the IRS were to assert successfully that the economic arrangements between us and our subsidiaries are not comparable to similar arrangements among unrelated parties.

Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs

An entity, or a portion of an entity, that does not elect to be treated as a REMIC may be classified as a taxable mortgage pool under the Code if:

substantially all of its assets consist of debt obligations or interests in debt obligations;

more than 50% of those debt obligations are real estate mortgages or interests in real estate mortgages as of specified testing dates;

the entity has issued debt obligations (liabilities) that have two or more maturities; and

the payments required to be made by the entity on its debt obligations bear a relationship to the payments to be received by the entity on the debt obligations that it holds as assets.

Under the Treasury regulations, if less than 80% of the assets of an entity (or a portion of an entity) consist of debt obligations, these debt obligations are considered not to comprise substantially all of its assets, and therefore the entity would not be treated as a taxable mortgage pool.

We have made and may in the future make investments or enter into financing and securitization transactions that give rise to our being considered to be, or to own an interest in, one or more taxable mortgage pools or REMICs, although we do not intend to engage in REMIC securitization transactions other than through a taxable REIT subsidiary.

Where an entity, or a portion of an entity, is classified as a taxable mortgage pool, it is generally treated as a taxable corporation for federal income tax purposes. However, special rules apply to a REIT, a portion of a REIT, or a qualified REIT subsidiary that is a taxable mortgage pool. The portion of a REIT's assets held directly or through a qualified REIT subsidiary that is classified as a taxable mortgage pool is treated as a qualified REIT subsidiary that is not subject to corporate income tax, and the taxable mortgage pool classification does not affect the tax status of the REIT. Rather, the consequences of the taxable mortgage pool classification would generally, except as described below, be limited to the REIT's stockholders. The Treasury Department has yet to issue regulations governing the tax treatment of the stockholders of a REIT that owns an interest in a taxable mortgage pool.

A portion of our income from a REMIC residual interest or taxable mortgage pool, including non-cash accrued income, or phantom taxable income, will be treated as excess inclusion income. Excess inclusion income is an amount, with respect to any calendar quarter, equal to the excess, if any, of (i) income allocable to the holder of a residual interest in a REMIC or taxable mortgage pool interest during such calendar quarter over (ii) the sum of an amount for each day in the calendar quarter equal to the product of (a) the adjusted issue price of the interest at the beginning of the quarter multiplied by (b) 120% of the long term federal rate (determined on the basis of compounding at the close of each calendar quarter and properly adjusted for the length of such quarter). This non-cash or phantom income would nonetheless be subject to the distribution requirements that

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apply to us and could therefore adversely affect our liquidity. See Annual Distribution Requirements Applicable to REITs. To the extent that a REMIC residual interest or taxable mortgage pool is owned through a taxable REIT subsidiary, any excess inclusion income generated by the REMIC residual interest or taxable mortgage pool will be recognized by the taxable REIT subsidiary, and we will not be subject to the distribution requirements with respect to any such amounts.

Our excess inclusion income will be allocated among our stockholders. A stockholder's share of excess inclusion income generally (i) will not be allowed to be offset by any net operating losses otherwise available to the stockholder, (ii) will be subject to tax as unrelated business taxable income in the hands of most types of stockholders that are otherwise generally exempt from federal income tax, and (iii) will result in the application of U.S. federal income tax withholding at the maximum rate (i.e., 30%), without reduction for any otherwise applicable income tax treaty, to the extent allocable to most types of foreign stockholders. See Taxation of Non-U.S. Holders of our Common Stock Distributions and Taxation of Tax-Exempt Holders. The manner in which excess inclusion income would be allocated among shares of different classes of our stock or how such income is to be reported to our stockholders is not entirely clear under current law. Tax-exempt investors, foreign investors and taxpayers with net operating losses should carefully consider the tax consequences described above and are urged to consult their tax advisors in connection with their decision to invest in our common stock.

If we were to own less than all of the equity interests in an entity that is classified as a taxable mortgage pool, the foregoing rules would not apply. Rather, the entity would be treated as a corporation for federal income tax purposes, and its taxable income would be subject to corporate income tax. In addition, this characterization could adversely affect our compliance with the REIT gross income and asset tests. We currently do not own, and currently do not intend to own, some, but less than all, of the equity interests in an entity that is or will become a taxable mortgage pool, and we intend to monitor the structure of any taxable mortgage pools in which we have an interest to ensure that they will not adversely affect our status as a REIT.

Income Tests

To qualify as a REIT, we must satisfy two gross income requirements, each of which is applied on an annual basis. First, at least 75% of our gross income, excluding gross income from prohibited transactions, for each taxable year generally must be derived directly or indirectly from:

rents from real property;

interest on debt secured by mortgages on real property or on interests in real property;

dividends or other distributions on, and gain from the sale of, stock in other REITs;

gain from the sale of real property or mortgage loans;

amounts, such as commitment fees, received in consideration for entering into an agreement to make a loan secured by real property, unless such amounts are determined by income and profits;

income derived from a REMIC in proportion to the real estate assets held by the REMIC, unless at least 95% of the REMIC's assets are real estate assets, in which case all of the income derived from the REMIC; and

interest or dividend income from investments in stock or debt instruments attributable to the temporary investment of new capital during the one-year period following our receipt of new capital that we raise through equity offerings or public offerings of debt obligations with at least a five-year term.

Second, at least 95% of our gross income, excluding gross income from prohibited transactions, for each taxable year must be derived from sources that qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test, and from (i) dividends, (ii) interest, (iii) for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2005, payments under certain qualifying hedging instruments and (iv) gain from the sale or disposition of stock, securities, or, for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2005, some hedging instruments. If less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC in which we hold an interest are real estate assets, we will be treated as receiving directly our proportionate share of the REMIC's income for purposes of the gross income tests.

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Our income for purposes of these tests includes our allocable share of all income earned by any entities in which we own an interest that are partnerships or disregarded entities for income tax purposes (including qualified REIT subsidiaries), and the subsidiaries of these partnerships or disregarded entities that are partnerships or disregarded entities for income tax purposes.

The income tests described above are based on our gross income. For U.S. federal income tax purposes, we will be treated as earning interest income on all of our loans that have been securitized and with respect to which we have not made a REMIC election. Although we will have a partially offsetting interest expense with respect to the interest owed on the securities issued pursuant to these securitizations, this interest expense will not reduce the gross income that we are considered to recognize for purposes of the gross income tests.

Gross income from servicing loans for third parties and loan origination fees is not qualifying income for purposes of either gross income test. In addition, gross income from our sale of property that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business is excluded from both the numerator and the denominator in both income tests. We have monitored and will continue to monitor the amount of our non-qualifying income and we have managed and will continue to manage our portfolio to comply at all times with the gross income tests. The following paragraphs discuss some of the specific applications of the gross income tests to us.

Dividends

Our share of any dividends received from our taxable REIT subsidiaries or any other corporation in which we may own an interest will qualify for purposes of the 95% gross income test but not for purposes of the 75% gross income test. We expect to limit any dividends from our corporate subsidiaries to stay within the limit on nonqualifying income under the 75% gross income test.

Interest

The term *interest*, as defined for purposes of both gross income tests, generally excludes any amount that is based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. We do not expect that any of our mortgage loans will be based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person.

Interest on debt secured by mortgages on real property or on other interests in real property, including, for this purpose, prepayment penalties, loan assumption fees and late payment charges that are not compensation for services, generally is qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test. However, if the highest principal amount of a loan outstanding during a taxable year exceeds the fair market value of the real property securing the loan as of the date we agreed to originate or acquire the loan, a portion of the interest income from such loan will not be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test but will be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test. The portion of the interest income that will not be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test will be equal to the portion of the principal amount of the loan that is not secured by real property—that is, the amount by which the loan exceeds the value of the real estate that is security for the loan.

The interest, original issue discount, and market discount income that we receive from our mortgage loans generally will be qualifying income for purposes of both gross income tests. However, as discussed above, if the fair market value of the real estate securing any of our loans is less than the principal amount of the loan, a portion of the income from that loan will be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test but not the 75% gross income test. We expect that all or substantially all of our interest from our mortgage loans will be qualifying income

for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests.

Fee Income

We may receive various fees in connection with the mortgage loans. The fees will be qualifying income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests if they are received in consideration for entering into an agreement to make a loan secured by real property, and the fees are not determined by income and profits.

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Therefore, commitment fees will generally be qualifying income for purposes of the income tests. Other fees, such as fees received for servicing loans for third parties and origination fees, are not qualifying income for purposes of either income test. Currently, we intend that all loan origination fees will be earned through our taxable REIT subsidiaries. In this case, the income earned by such subsidiaries from these services will not be included for purposes of our gross income tests.

Hedging Transactions

From time to time, we may enter into hedging transactions with respect to one or more of our assets or liabilities. Such hedging activities may include entering into interest rate swaps, caps, and floors, options, and futures and forward contracts. To the extent that we enter into an interest rate swap or cap contract, option, futures contract, forward rate agreement, or any similar financial instrument to hedge our indebtedness incurred or to be incurred to acquire or carry real estate assets, including mortgage loans, any periodic income or gain from the disposition of that contract attributable to the carrying or acquisition of the real estate assets should be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test, but not the 75% gross income test. Effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, however, such amounts will generally not constitute gross income and therefore will be disregarded for purposes of the 95% gross income test if certain identification and other requirements are satisfied, and will be treated as nonqualifying income for the 95% and 75% gross income tests if such requirements are not satisfied. To the extent that we hedge with other types of financial instruments, or to the extent that a portion of our mortgage loans is not secured by real estate assets (as described below under *Asset Tests*) or in other situations, the income from those transactions is not likely to be treated as qualifying income for purposes of the gross income tests. We intend to structure any hedging transactions in a manner that does not jeopardize our status as a REIT.

Rents from Real Property

We currently do not own any real property (other than a small amount of real property acquired through the foreclosure of mortgage loans). To the extent that we acquire real property or an interest therein in the future, rents we receive will generally qualify as rents from real property in satisfying the gross income requirements for a REIT described above only if several conditions are met. These conditions relate to the identity of the tenant, the computation of the rent payable, and the nature of the property leased. First, the amount of rent must not be based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. However, an amount received or accrued generally will not be excluded from rents from real property solely by reason of being based on a fixed percentage of percentages of receipts or sales. Second, rents received from a related party tenant will not qualify as rents from real property in satisfying the gross income tests unless, generally, the tenant is a taxable REIT subsidiary, at least 90% of the property is leased to unrelated tenants (determined on specified testing dates) and the rent paid by the taxable REIT subsidiary is substantially comparable to the rent paid by the unrelated tenants for comparable space. A tenant is a related party tenant if the REIT, or an actual or constructive owner of 10% or more of the REIT, actually or constructively owns 10% or more of the tenant. Third, if rent attributable to personal property, leased in connection with a lease of real property, is greater than 15% of the total rent received under the lease, then the portion of rent attributable to the personal property will not qualify as rents from real property. Finally, for rents to qualify as rents from real property for purposes of the gross income tests, we are generally only allowed to provide services that are both usually or customarily rendered in connection with the rental of real property and not otherwise considered rendered to the occupant, except through a taxable REIT subsidiary or an independent contractor from which the REIT itself does not derive or receive any income.

Prohibited Transactions Tax

A REIT will incur a 100% tax on the net income derived from any sale or other disposition of property, other than foreclosure property, that the REIT holds primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business. We believe that none of our portfolio assets are held-for-sale to customers and that a sale of any of our portfolio assets would not be in the ordinary course of our business. Whether a REIT holds an asset

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primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business depends, however, on the facts and circumstances in effect from time to time, including those related to a particular asset. We cannot provide assurance that we will avoid owning property that may be characterized as property that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business. After completing this offering, our taxable REIT subsidiaries will continue to sell a portion of the loans that they originate on a whole loan sale basis and any other loans the sale of which could be subject to the prohibited transactions tax. Sales of loans by our taxable REIT subsidiaries will not be subject to this 100% tax but such subsidiaries will be subject to regular corporate taxes on their net income.

We currently intend that any securitizations that we may undertake following this offering with regard to our loans will not be treated as sales for tax purposes. If we were to transfer a mortgage loan to a REMIC, this transfer would be treated as a sale for tax purposes and the sale may be subject to the prohibited transactions tax. As a result, REMICs are not a viable option for us to securitize our mortgage loans. Instead, we intend to structure our securitizations as non-REMIC collateralized mortgage obligation transactions, which are treated as financings for tax purposes.

Foreclosure Property

Foreclosure property is any real property, including interests in real property, and any personal property incident to such real property:

that is acquired by a REIT as the result of the REIT having bid in such property at foreclosure, or having otherwise reduced such property to ownership or possession by agreement or process of law, after there was a default or default was imminent on a lease of such property or on indebtedness that such property secured;

for which the related loan was acquired by the REIT at a time when the default was not imminent or anticipated; and

for which the REIT makes a proper election to treat the property as foreclosure property.

However, a REIT will not be considered to have foreclosed on a property where the REIT takes control of the property as a mortgagee-in-possession and cannot receive any profit or sustain any loss except as a creditor of the mortgagor.

Property generally ceases to be foreclosure property at the end of the third taxable year following the taxable year in which the REIT acquired the property, or longer if an extension is granted by the Secretary of the Treasury. This grace period terminates and foreclosure property ceases to be foreclosure property on the first day:

on which a lease is entered into for the property that, by its terms, will give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test, or any amount is received or accrued, directly or indirectly, pursuant to a lease entered into on or after such day that will give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test;

on which any construction takes place on the property, other than completion of a building or any other improvement, where more than 10% of the construction was completed before default became imminent; or

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which is more than 90 days after the day on which the REIT acquired the property and the property is used in a trade or business that is conducted by the REIT, other than through an independent contractor from whom the REIT itself does not derive or receive any income.

We will be subject to tax at the maximum corporate rate on any income from foreclosure property, other than income that otherwise would be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test, less expenses directly connected with the production of that income. However, income from foreclosure property, including gain from the sale of foreclosure property held-for-sale in the ordinary course of a trade or business, will qualify for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests.

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We may have the option to foreclose on mortgage loans when a borrower is in default. The foregoing rules would affect the implications of a decision by us to foreclose on a particular mortgage loan and may affect whether we will choose to foreclose with regard to a particular mortgage loan.

Failure to Satisfy Income Tests

If we fail to satisfy one or both of the 75% and 95% gross income tests for any taxable year, we may nevertheless qualify as a REIT for that year if we are entitled to relief under the Code. These relief provisions generally will be available if our failure to meet the tests is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect, we attach a schedule of the sources of our income to our federal income tax return and any incorrect information on the schedule is not due to fraud with intent to evade tax. Effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, these relief provisions generally will be available if our failure to meet the tests is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect and if we satisfy specified filing and disclosure requirements set forth in the Code. It is not possible, however, to state whether in all circumstances we would be entitled to the benefit of these relief provisions. For example, if we fail to satisfy the gross income tests because nonqualifying income that we intentionally recognize exceeds the limits on nonqualifying income, the IRS could conclude that the failure to satisfy the tests was not due to reasonable cause. If these relief provisions are inapplicable to a particular set of circumstances, we could fail to qualify as a REIT. Even if these relief provisions apply, a penalty tax would be imposed based on the amount of nonqualifying income. See *Taxation as a REIT* General.

Asset Tests

At the close of each quarter of our taxable year, we must satisfy six tests relating to the nature of our assets.

First, at least 75% of the value of our total assets must be represented by the following:

- (1) interests in real property, including leaseholds and options to acquire real property and leaseholds;
- (2) interests in mortgages on real property;
- (3) stock in other REITs;
- (4) cash and cash items;
- (5) government securities;

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(6) investments in stock or debt instruments attributable to the temporary investment of new capital during the one-year period following our receipt of new capital that we raise through equity offerings or public offerings of debt obligations with at least a five-year term; and

(7) regular or residual interests in a REMIC. However, if less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC consists of assets that are qualifying real estate-related assets under the federal income tax laws, determined as if we held such assets directly, we will be treated as holding directly our proportionate share of the assets of such REMIC.

Second, not more than 25% of our total assets may be represented by securities, other than those in the 75% asset class.

Third, the value of any one issuer's securities owned by us may not exceed 5% of the value of our total assets.

Fourth, we may not own more than 10% of any one issuer's outstanding voting securities.

Fifth, we may not own more than 10% of the total value of the outstanding securities of any one issuer, other than securities that qualify for the straight debt exception discussed below.

Sixth, no more than 20% of the value of our total assets may be represented by the securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries.

For purposes of the third, fourth and fifth asset tests, the term securities does not include equity or debt securities of a qualified REIT subsidiary or taxable REIT subsidiary, mortgage loans that constitute real estate

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assets, other securities included in the 75% asset class above, or equity interests in a partnership. The term securities, however, generally includes debt securities issued by a partnership or another REIT. However, straight debt securities and certain other obligations, including loans to individuals or estates, certain specified loans to partnerships, certain specified rental agreements and securities issued by REITs, securities are not treated as securities for purposes of the fifth asset test. Straight debt means a written unconditional promise to pay on demand on a specified date a sum certain in money if (i) the debt is not convertible, directly or indirectly, into stock, (ii) the interest rate and interest payment dates are not contingent on profits, the borrower's discretion, or similar factors (subject to certain specified exceptions) and (iii) the issuer is either not a corporation or a partnership or the only securities of the issuer held by us, and certain of our taxable REIT subsidiaries subject to a de minimis exception are straight debt.

As discussed in Other Disregarded Entities and Partnerships, our assets for purposes of these tests include our allocable share of all assets held by any entities in which we own an interest that are partnerships or disregarded entities (including qualified REIT subsidiaries) for income tax purposes, and the subsidiaries of these partnerships or disregarded entities that are partnerships or disregarded entities for income tax purposes.

The asset tests described above are based on our total assets. With regard to any securitizations following this offering for federal income tax purposes, we will be treated as owning both the loans we hold directly and the loans that we have securitized in non-REMIC collateralized mortgage obligation transactions. Although we will have a partially offsetting obligation with respect to the securities issued pursuant to the securitizations, these offsetting obligations will not reduce the total assets we are considered to own for purposes of the asset tests.

We believe that all or substantially all of the mortgage loans that we will be considered to own for purposes of these rules will be qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test. For purposes of these rules, however, if the outstanding principal balance of a mortgage loan exceeds the fair market value of the real property securing the loan, a portion of such loan likely will not be a qualifying real estate asset under the federal income tax laws. Although the law on the matter is not entirely clear, it appears that the non-qualifying portion of that mortgage loan will be equal to the portion of the loan amount that exceeds the value of the associated real property that is security for that loan. To the extent that we own debt securities issued by other REITs or C corporations that are not secured by mortgages on real property, those debt securities will not be qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test. We will monitor the status of our assets for purposes of the various asset tests and will seek to manage our portfolio to comply at all times with such tests. There can be no assurances, however, that we will be successful in this effort. In this regard, to determine our compliance with these requirements, we will need to estimate the value of the real estate securing our mortgage loans at various times. In addition, we will have to value our investment in taxable REIT subsidiaries and our other assets to ensure compliance with the 20% asset test applicable to our investment in one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries. Although we will seek to be prudent in making these estimates, there can be no assurances that the IRS will not disagree with these determinations, in which case we might not satisfy the asset tests and could fail to qualify as a REIT.

We will not lose our status as a REIT if we fail to satisfy the asset tests at the end of a quarter solely by reason of changes in the relative values of our assets. If the failure to satisfy the asset tests results from the acquisition of securities or other property during a quarter, the failure can be cured by a disposition of sufficient non-qualifying assets or acquisition of sufficient qualifying assets within 30 days after the close of that quarter. We maintain adequate records of the value of our assets to ensure compliance with the asset tests and intend to take any available action within 30 days after the close of any quarter as may be required to cure any noncompliance with the asset tests. We cannot ensure that these steps always will be successful. If we fail to cure the noncompliance with the asset tests within this 30-day period, we could fail to qualify as a REIT.

In addition, effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, we may avoid disqualification in the event of certain failures if (i) the failure was due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, (ii) the failure is timely corrected, (iii) a penalty amount is paid and (iv) other requirements are met; or the failure was de minimis and timely corrected.

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We currently believe that the loans, securities and other assets that we hold satisfy the foregoing asset test requirements. However, in many cases, no independent appraisals will be obtained to support our conclusions as to the value of our asset, securities and the real estate collateral for the mortgage loans that we hold. Moreover, values of some assets may not be susceptible to a precise determination. As a result, there can be no assurance that the IRS will not contend that our interest in securities and other assets will not cause a violation of the asset tests applicable to REITs.

Annual Distribution Requirements Applicable to REITs

To qualify as a REIT, we generally must distribute dividends (other than capital gain dividends) to our stockholders in an amount at least equal to the sum of:

90% of our REIT taxable income, computed without regard to the dividends paid deduction and our net capital gain; and

90% of our net income after tax, if any, from foreclosure property; minus the excess of the sum of specified items of non-cash income (including original issue discount on our mortgage loans) over 5% of our REIT taxable income, computed without regard to the dividends paid deduction and our net capital gain.

Distributions generally must be made during the taxable year to which they relate. However, if we declare a dividend in October, November, or December of any year with a record date in the month of declaration and pay the dividend on or before January 31 of the following year, we will be treated as having paid the dividend on December 31 of the year in which the dividend was declared. In addition, distributions may be made in the following year if the dividends are declared before we timely file our tax return for the year and if made before the first regular dividend payment made after such declaration. To the extent that we do not distribute all of our net capital gain or we distribute at least 90%, but less than 100% of our REIT taxable income, as adjusted, we will be subject to tax on the undistributed amount at regular corporate tax rates.

Furthermore, we will incur a 4% nondeductible excise tax on the excess of the required distribution over the sum of the distributed amount if we fail to distribute during a calendar year (or, in the case of distributions with declaration and record dates falling in the last three months of the calendar year, by the end of January following such calendar year) at least the excess of the sum of (i) 85% of our REIT ordinary income for such year, (ii) 95% of our REIT capital gain net income for such year, and (iii) any undistributed taxable income from prior periods, over any excess distributions from prior years.

We may elect to retain rather than distribute all or a portion of our net capital gains and pay the tax on the gains. In that case, we may elect to have our stockholders include their proportionate share of the undistributed net capital gains in income as long-term capital gains and receive a credit for their share of the tax paid by us. For purposes of the 4% nondeductible excise tax described above, any retained amounts for which we elect this treatment would be treated as having been distributed.

We intend to make timely distributions sufficient to satisfy the distribution requirements. It is possible that, from time to time, we may not have sufficient cash to meet the distribution requirements due to timing differences between (i) the actual receipt of cash, including the receipt of distributions from subsidiaries, and (ii) the inclusion of items of income by us for federal income tax purposes. Possible examples of those timing differences include the following:

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Because we may deduct capital losses only to the extent of our capital gains, we may have taxable income that exceeds our economic income.

We will recognize phantom taxable income from any retained ownership interests in mortgage loans subject to collateralized mortgage obligation debt that we own.

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We will recognize taxable income in advance of the related cash flow if any of our mortgage loans are deemed to have original issue discount. We generally must accrue original issue discount based on a constant yield method that takes into account projected prepayments but that defers taking into account credit losses until they are actually incurred.

We may recognize taxable market discount income when we receive the proceeds from the disposition of, or principal payments on, loans that have a stated redemption price at maturity that is greater than our tax basis in those loans, although such proceeds often will be used to make non-deductible principal payments on related borrowings.

We may recognize taxable income without receiving a corresponding cash distribution if we foreclose on or make a significant modification to a loan, to the extent that the fair market value of the underlying property or the principal amount of the modified loan, as applicable, exceeds our basis in the original loan.

Although several types of non-cash income are excluded in determining the annual distribution requirement, we may incur corporate income tax and a 4% nondeductible excise tax with respect to those non-cash income items if we do not distribute those items on a current basis.

As a result of the foregoing, we may have less cash than is necessary to distribute all of our taxable income and thereby avoid corporate income tax and the excise tax imposed on certain undistributed income. In such a situation, we may need to borrow funds or issue additional common or preferred stock.

Under some circumstances, we may be able to rectify a failure to meet the distribution requirement for a year by paying deficiency dividends to stockholders in a later year, which may be included in our deduction for dividends paid for the earlier year. Thus, we may be able to avoid being taxed on amounts distributed as deficiency dividends. However, we will be required to pay interest based upon the amount of any deduction taken for deficiency dividends.

Record Keeping Requirements

We are required to comply with applicable record keeping requirements. Failure to comply could result in monetary fines. For example, we must request on an annual basis information from our stockholders designed to disclose the actual ownership of our outstanding common stock.

Failure to Qualify

If we fail to qualify for taxation as a REIT in any taxable year and the relief provisions do not apply, we will be subject to tax, including any applicable alternative minimum tax, on our taxable income at regular corporate rates. This would significantly reduce both our cash available for distribution to our stockholders and our earnings. If we fail to qualify as a REIT, we will not be required to make any distributions to stockholders and any distributions that are made will not be deductible. Moreover, all distributions to stockholders would be taxable as dividends to the extent of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, whether or not attributable to our capital gains. Subject to certain limitations of the Code, corporate distributees may be eligible for the dividends received deduction with respect to those distributions, and domestic noncorporate distributees may be eligible for the reduced income tax rate of 15% on such dividends. Unless we are entitled to relief under specific statutory provisions, we also will be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which qualification was lost. We cannot state whether in all circumstances we would be entitled to this statutory relief.

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Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Common Stock

U.S. Holder

As used in the remainder of this discussion, the term **U.S. holder** means a beneficial owner of our common stock that is for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

a citizen or resident alien individual, as defined in Section 7701(b) of the Code, of the United States;

a corporation or other entity treated as a corporation for federal income tax purposes, created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or any state or the District of Columbia;

an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

in general, a trust subject to the primary supervision of a U.S. court and the control of one or more U.S. persons or the trust was in existence on August 20, 1996 and has made a valid election to be treated as a U.S. person.

Generally, in the case of a partnership that holds our common stock, any partner that would be a U.S. holder if it held such common stock directly is also a U.S. holder.

Distributions Generally

As long as we qualify as a REIT, distributions made to taxable U.S. holders of our common stock out of current or accumulated earnings and profits that are not designated as capital gain dividends or qualified dividend income will be taken into account by them as ordinary income taxable at ordinary income tax rates and will not qualify for the maximum 15% rate that generally applies to distributions by non-REIT C corporations to stockholders who are taxed as individuals. In determining the extent to which a distribution constitutes a dividend for tax purposes, our earnings and profits will be allocated first to distributions with respect to our preferred stock, if any, and then to our common stock. Corporate stockholders will not be eligible for the dividends received deduction with respect to these distributions.

Distributions in excess of both our current and accumulated earnings and profits will not be taxable to a U.S. holder to the extent that the distributions do not exceed the adjusted basis of the holder's stock. Rather, such distributions will reduce the adjusted basis of the stock. To the extent that distributions exceed the adjusted basis of a U.S. holder's stock, the distributions will be taxable as capital gains, assuming the stock is held as a capital asset in the hands of the U.S. holder.

Distributions will generally be taxable, if at all, in the year of the distribution. However, if we declare a dividend in October, November, or December of any year with a record date in the month of declaration and pay the dividend on or before January 31 of the following year, we will be treated as having paid the dividend, and the stockholder will be treated as having received the dividend, on December 31 of the year in which

the dividend was declared.

Capital Gain Dividends

We may elect to designate distributions of our net capital gain as capital gain dividends. Capital gain dividends are taxed to U.S. holders as gain from the sale or exchange of a capital asset held for more than one year. This tax treatment applies regardless of the period during which the stockholders have held their stock. If we designate any portion of a dividend as a capital gain dividend, the amount that will be taxable to the stockholder as capital gain will be indicated to U.S. holders on IRS Form 1099-DIV. Corporate stockholders, however, may be required to treat up to 20% of capital gain dividends as ordinary income.

Instead of paying capital gain dividends, we may elect to require stockholders to include our undistributed net capital gains in their income. If we make such an election, U.S. holders (i) will include in their income as long-term capital gains their proportionate share of such undistributed capital gains and (ii) will be deemed to

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have paid their proportionate share of the tax paid by us on such undistributed capital gains and thereby receive a credit or refund for such amount. A U.S. holder will increase the basis in its stock by the difference between the amount of capital gain included in its income and the amount of tax it is deemed to have paid. Our earnings and profits will be adjusted appropriately.

We must classify portions of our designated capital gain dividend into the following categories:

a 15% gain distribution, which would be taxable to non-corporate U.S. holders at a maximum rate of 15%; or

an unrecaptured Section 1250 gain distribution, which would be taxable to non-corporate U.S. holders of our stock at a maximum rate of 25%.

Recipients of capital gain dividends that are taxed at corporate income tax rates will be taxed at the normal corporate income tax rates on those dividends.

Qualified Dividend Income

Dividends paid to a U.S. holder generally will not qualify for the 15% tax rate for qualified dividend income. The Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 reduced the maximum tax rate for qualified dividend income from 38.6% to 15% for tax years 2003 through 2008. Without future congressional action, the maximum tax rate on qualified dividend income will move to 35% in 2009 and 39.6% in 2011. Qualified dividend income generally includes dividends paid by domestic C corporations and certain qualified foreign corporations to most U.S. noncorporate stockholders. Because we are not generally subject to federal income tax on the portion of our taxable income distributed to our stockholders, dividends generally will not be eligible for the 15% rate on qualified dividend income. As a result, ordinary REIT dividends from us will continue to be taxed at the higher tax rate applicable to ordinary income. Currently, the highest marginal individual income tax rate on ordinary income is 35%. However, the 15% tax rate for qualified dividend income will apply to ordinary REIT dividends from us, if any, that are (i) attributable to dividends received by us from non-REIT corporations, such as our taxable REIT subsidiaries, (ii) attributable to income earned in non-REIT taxable years or (iii) attributable to income upon which we have paid corporate income tax (e.g., to the extent that we distribute less than 100% of our taxable income). In general, to qualify for the reduced tax rate on qualified dividend income, a stockholder must hold our common stock for more than 60 days during the 121-day period beginning on the date that is 60 days before the date on which the common stock becomes ex-dividend.

Other Tax Considerations

Distributions made by us and gain arising from the sale or exchange by a U.S. holder of our stock will not be treated as passive activity income, and as a result, U.S. holders generally will not be able to apply any passive losses against this income or gain. In addition, taxable distributions from us generally will be treated as investment income for purposes of the investment interest limitations. A non-corporate U.S. holder of our stock may elect to treat capital gain dividends, capital gains from the disposition of stock and income designated as qualified dividend income as investment income for purposes of the investment interest limitation, in which case the applicable gains will be taxed at ordinary income tax rates. U.S. holders may not include in their individual income tax returns any of our net operating losses or capital losses. We would carryover our operating or capital losses for potential offset against future income, subject to applicable limitations.

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We may recognize taxable income in excess of our economic income, known as phantom income, in the early years that we hold certain investments, and experience an offsetting excess of economic income over our taxable income in later years. As a result, U.S. holders at times may be required to pay federal income tax on distributions that economically represent a return of capital rather than a dividend. These distributions would be offset in later years by distributions representing economic income that would be treated as returns of capital for federal income tax purposes.

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Any excess inclusion income that we recognize generally will be allocated among our stockholders to the extent it exceeds our undistributed REIT taxable income in a particular year. A U.S. holder's share of excess inclusion income would not be offset by any net operating losses of the U.S. holder that would otherwise be available. See Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs.

Sales of Common Stock

Upon any taxable sale or other disposition of our common stock, a U.S. holder will recognize capital gain or loss for federal income tax purposes on the disposition in an amount equal to the difference between:

the amount of cash and the fair market value of any property received on such disposition; and

the U.S. holder's adjusted basis in such common stock for tax purposes.

The applicable tax rate will depend on the holder's holding period in the asset (generally, if an asset has been held for more than one year it will produce long-term capital gain) and the holder's tax bracket. A U.S. holder who is an individual or an estate or trust and who has long-term capital gain or loss will be subject to a maximum capital gain rate of 15%. The IRS has the authority to prescribe, but has not yet prescribed, regulations that would apply a capital gain tax rate of 25% (which is generally higher than the long-term capital gain tax rates for non-corporate holders) to a portion of capital gain realized by a non-corporate holder on the sale of REIT common stock that would correspond to the REIT's unrecaptured Section 1250 gain. We do not expect any material amount of such unrecaptured Section 1250 gain. Holders are advised to consult with their own tax advisors with respect to their capital gain tax liability. A corporate U.S. holder will be subject to tax at a maximum rate of 35% on capital gain from the sale of our stock. Deduction of capital losses may be subject to limitations.

In general, any loss upon a sale or exchange of our common stock by a U.S. holder who has held such stock for six months or less (after applying certain holding period rules) will be treated as a long-term capital loss, but only to the extent of distributions received by such U.S. holder that are required to be treated by such U.S. holder as long-term capital gains.

Taxation of Non-U.S. Holders of our Common Stock

Non-U.S. Holder

A non-U.S. holder is a beneficial owner of our common stock that is an individual, corporation or other entity treated as a corporation for federal income tax purposes, an estate or a trust and that is not a U.S. holder. See Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Common Stock U.S. Holder.

Distributions

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Distributions by us to a non-U.S. holder of common stock that are neither attributable to gain from sales or exchanges by us of U.S. real property interests nor designated by us as capital gains dividends will be treated as dividends of ordinary income to the extent that they are made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits. These distributions ordinarily will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a gross basis at a rate of 30%, or a lower rate as permitted under an applicable income tax treaty, unless the dividends are treated as effectively connected with the conduct by the non-U.S. holder of a U.S. trade or business (and attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment, in the case of a non-U.S. holder entitled to the benefits of an applicable tax treaty). Under some treaties, however, lower rates generally applicable to dividends do not apply to dividends from REITs. Further, reduced treaty rates are not available to the extent that the income allocated to the foreign stockholder is excess inclusion income. Excess inclusion income will generally be allocated to stockholders to the extent we have excess inclusion income that exceeds our undistributed REIT taxable income in a particular year. See Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs. Dividends that are effectively connected with a trade or business will be subject to tax on a net basis, that is, after allowance for deductions, at graduated rates, in the

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same manner as U.S. holders are taxed with respect to these dividends, and are generally not subject to withholding. Applicable certification and disclosure requirements must be satisfied to be exempt from withholding under the effectively connected income exception. Any dividends received by a corporate non-U.S. holder that is engaged in a U.S. trade or business also may be subject to an additional branch profits tax at a 30% rate, or lower applicable treaty rate. We expect to withhold U.S. income tax at the rate of 30% on any dividend distributions not designated as (or deemed to be) capital gain dividends made to a non-U.S. holder unless:

a lower treaty rate applies and the non-U.S. holder files an IRS Form W-8BEN evidencing eligibility for that reduced rate; or

the non-U.S. holder files an IRS Form W-8ECI claiming that the distribution is income effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder's trade or business.

Distributions in excess of our current or accumulated earnings and profits that do not exceed the adjusted basis of the non-U.S. holder in our common stock will reduce the non-U.S. holder's adjusted basis in our common stock and will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax. Distributions in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits that do exceed the adjusted basis of the non-U.S. holder in our common stock will be treated as gain from the sale of our stock, the tax treatment of which is described below. See Sales of Common Stock.

We may be required to withhold at least 10% of any distribution in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, even if a lower treaty rate applies or the non-U.S. holder is not liable for tax on the receipt of that distribution. However, a non-U.S. holder may seek a refund of these amounts from the IRS if the non-U.S. holder's U.S. tax liability with respect to the distribution is less than the amount withheld.

Distributions to a non-U.S. holder that are designated by us at the time of the distribution as capital gain dividends, other than those arising from the disposition of a U.S. real property interest, generally should not be subject to U.S. federal income taxation unless:

the investment in the common stock is effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder's trade or business, in which case the non-U.S. holder will be subject to the same treatment as U.S. holders with respect to any gain, except that a holder that is a foreign corporation also may be subject to the 30% branch profits tax, as discussed above; or

the non-U.S. holder is a nonresident alien individual who is present in the U.S. for 183 days or more during the taxable year and certain other requirements are met, in which case the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual's capital gains.

Under the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act, which is referred to as FIRPTA, distributions to a non-U.S. holder that are attributable to gain from sales or exchanges by us of U.S. real property interests, whether or not designated as a capital gain dividend, will cause the non-U.S. holder to be treated as recognizing gain that is income effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business. Non-U.S. holders will be taxed on this gain at the same rates applicable to U.S. holders, subject to a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals. Also, this gain may be subject to a 30% (or lower applicable treaty rate) branch profits tax in the hands of a non-U.S. holder that is a corporation. We generally do not expect to pay dividends that are subject to FIRPTA.

Notwithstanding the foregoing and effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, distributions (including capital gain distributions) with respect to any class of stock of a REIT which is regularly traded on an established securities market located in the United States will not be treated as gain recognized from the sale or exchange of a U.S. real property interest if the non-U.S. holder does not own 5% of such class of stock at any time during the taxable year.

We will be required to withhold and remit to the IRS 35% of any distributions to non-U.S. holders that are designated as capital gain dividends, or, if greater, 35% of a distribution that could have been designated as a capital gain dividend, whether or not attributable to sales of U.S. real property interests. Distributions can be

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designated as capital gains to the extent of our net capital gain for the taxable year of the distribution. The amount withheld, which for individual non-U.S. holders may exceed the actual tax liability, is creditable against the non-U.S. holder's U.S. federal income tax liability.

Sales of Common Stock

Gain recognized by a non-U.S. holder upon the sale or exchange of our stock generally would not be subject to U.S. taxation unless:

the investment in common stock is effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder's U.S. trade or business (and attributable to a U.S. permanent establishment, in the case of a non-U.S. holder entitled to the benefits of an applicable tax treaty), in which case the non-U.S. holder will be subject to the same treatment as U.S. holders with respect to any gain;

the non-U.S. holder is a nonresident alien individual who is present in the United States for 183 days or more during the taxable year and certain other requirements are met, in which case the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual's net capital gains for the taxable year; or

the common stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest within the meaning of FIRPTA, as described below.

Our common stock will not constitute a U.S. real property interest if we are not a U.S. real property holding corporation or a domestically-controlled REIT. Whether we are a U.S. real property holding corporation will depend upon whether the fair market value of U.S. real property interests owned by us equals or exceeds 50% of the fair market value of our assets. Because our assets will consist primarily of single-family residential mortgage loans, we do not expect that our assets will cause us to be considered a U.S. real property holding corporation. We will be a domestically-controlled REIT if, at all times during a specified testing period, less than 50% in value of our stock is held directly or indirectly by non-U.S. holders. We cannot guarantee that we will remain a domestically-controlled REIT.

In addition, even if we are a U.S. real property holding corporation and do not qualify as a domestically-controlled REIT at the time a non-U.S. holder sells its stock, the gain from such a sale by such a non-U.S. holder will not be subject to FIRPTA tax if:

the class or series of stock sold is considered regularly traded under applicable Treasury regulations on an established securities market, such as the NYSE; and

the selling non-U.S. holder owned, actually or constructively, 5% or less in value of the outstanding class or series of stock being sold during the shorter of the period during which the non-U.S. holder held such class or series of stock or the five-year period ending on the date of the sale or exchange.

If gain on the sale or exchange of our common stock were subject to taxation under FIRPTA, the non-U.S. holder would be subject to regular U.S. income tax with respect to any gain in the same manner as a taxable U.S. holder, subject to any applicable alternative minimum tax and special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals.

Taxation of Tax-Exempt Holders

Provided that a tax-exempt holder has not held its common stock as debt financed property within the meaning of the Code and our shares of stock are not being used in an unrelated trade or business, our dividends generally will not be unrelated business taxable income, referred to as UBTI, to a tax-exempt holder. Similarly, income from the sale of our common stock will not constitute UBTI unless the tax-exempt holder has held its common stock as debt financed property within the meaning of the Code or has used the common stock in a trade or business. However, a portion of the dividends paid to a tax-exempt stockholder that is allocable to excess inclusion income will be subject to tax as UBTI. Excess inclusion income will generally be allocated to stockholders to the extent we have excess inclusion income that exceeds our undistributed REIT taxable income in a particular year. See Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs.

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Further, for a tax-exempt holder that is a social club, voluntary employee benefit association, supplemental unemployment benefit trust, or qualified group legal services plan exempt from federal income taxation under Sections 501(c)(7), (c)(9), (c)(17) and (c)(20) of the Code, respectively, or a single parent title-holding corporation exempt under Section 501(c)(2) the income of which is payable to any of the aforementioned tax exempt organizations, income from an investment in our common stock will constitute UBTI unless the organization properly sets aside or reserves such amounts for purposes specified in the Code. These tax-exempt holders should consult their own tax advisors concerning these set aside and reserve requirements.

Notwithstanding the above, however, a portion of the dividends paid by a pension held REIT are treated as UBTI as to any trust that is described in Section 401(a) of the Code, is tax-exempt under Section 501(a) of the Code, and holds more than 10%, by value, of the interests in the REIT. Tax-exempt pension funds that are described in Section 401(a) of the Code are referred to below as pension trusts.

A REIT is a pension held REIT if it meets the following two tests:

it would not have qualified as a REIT but for Section 856(h)(3) of the Code, which provides that stock owned by pension trusts will be treated, for purposes of determining whether the REIT is closely held, as owned by the beneficiaries of the trust rather than by the trust itself; and

either (i) at least one pension trust holds more than 25% of the value of the interests in the REIT, or (ii) a group of pension trusts each individually holding more than 10% of the value of the REIT's stock, collectively owns more than 50% of the value of the REIT's stock.

The percentage of any REIT dividend from a pension held REIT that is treated as UBTI is equal to the ratio of the UBTI earned by the REIT, treating the REIT as if it were a pension trust and therefore subject to tax on UBTI, to the total gross income of the REIT. An exception applies where the percentage is less than 5% for any year, in which case none of the dividends would be treated as UBTI. The provisions requiring pension trusts to treat a portion of REIT distributions as UBTI will not apply if the REIT is not a pension held REIT (for example, if the REIT is able to satisfy the not closely held requirement without relying on the look through exception with respect to pension trusts). Based on the limitations on transfer and ownership of our common stock in our charter, we do not expect to be classified as a pension held REIT.

Backup Withholding Tax and Information Reporting

Backup withholding generally will not apply to dividends paid to a non-U.S. holder of our common stock if such holder furnishes appropriate documentation of its non-U.S. status. However, certain information reporting will apply with respect to dividend payments even if certification is provided. The payment of proceeds from a non-U.S. holder's disposition of our common stock to or through the U.S. office of any broker, domestic or foreign, will be subject to information reporting and possible backup withholding unless such holder certifies as to its non-U.S. status under penalties of perjury or otherwise establishes an exemption, provided that the broker does not have actual knowledge that such holder is a U.S. person or that the conditions of an exemption are not, in fact, satisfied. The payment of proceeds from a holder's disposition of our common stock to or through a non-U.S. office of either a U.S. broker or a non-U.S. broker that is a U.S.-related person will be subject to information reporting, but not backup withholding, unless such broker has documentary evidence in its files that such holder is not a U.S. person and the broker has no knowledge to the contrary, or such holder establishes an exemption. For this purpose, a U.S.-related person is (i) a controlled foreign corporation, or CFC, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, (ii) a foreign person 50% or more of whose gross income from all sources for certain periods is derived from activities that are effectively connected with the conduct of a U.S. trade or business or (iii) a foreign partnership that is either engaged in the conduct of a trade or business in the United States or of which 50% or more of its income or capital interests are held by U.S. persons. Neither information reporting nor backup withholding will apply to a payment of the proceeds of a disposition of our common stock by or through a non-U.S. office or a non-U.S. broker that is not a U.S.-related person. Copies of any information returns filed with the IRS may be made available by the IRS, under the provisions of a specific treaty or agreement, to the taxing authorities of the

country in which a holder resides.

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Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Holders generally will be entitled to credit any amounts withheld under the backup withholding rules against their U.S. federal income tax liability, provided the required information is furnished to the IRS in a timely manner.

THE PRECEDING DISCUSSION OF UNITED STATES FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY. IT IS NOT TAX ADVICE. EACH PROSPECTIVE INVESTOR SHOULD CONSULT ITS OWN TAX ADVISOR REGARDING THE PARTICULAR UNITED STATES FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL AND FOREIGN TAX CONSEQUENCES OF PURCHASING, HOLDING AND DISPOSING OF OUR COMMON STOCK, INCLUDING THE CONSEQUENCE OF ANY PROPOSED CHANGE IN APPLICABLE LAWS.

Sunset of Reduced Tax Rate Provisions

Several of the tax considerations described herein are subject to a sunset provision. The sunset provisions generally provide that for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2008, certain provisions that are currently in the Code will revert back to a prior version of those provisions. These provisions include provisions related to the reduced maximum income tax rate for capital gains of 15% (rather than 20%) for taxpayers taxed at noncorporate rates, qualified dividend income, including the application of the 15% tax rate to qualified dividend income, and certain other tax rate provisions described herein. The potential impact of these reversions is not discussed herein. Consequently, prospective stockholders should consult their own tax advisors regarding the effect of sunset provisions on an investment in our common stock.

State and Local Taxes

We and our stockholders may be subject to state or local taxation in various state or local jurisdictions, including those in which we or they transact business or reside. Our state and local tax treatment and that of our stockholders may not conform to the federal income tax treatment discussed above. Consequently, prospective stockholders should consult their own tax advisors regarding the effect of state and local tax laws on an investment in our common stock.

Proposed Legislation

Legislation has been introduced from time to time that would amend certain rules relating to REITs. As of the date hereof, it is not possible to predict with any certainty whether any such legislation will be enacted. Prospective investors should therefore consult their own advisors regarding the effects of any such legislation.

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PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities offered pursuant to this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplements to or through one or more underwriters or dealers or we may sell the securities to investors directly or through agents or through any combination of these methods of sale. We also may, from time to time, authorize dealers or agents to offer and sell these securities upon terms and conditions as may be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. We also may sell directly to investors through subscription rights distributed to our stockholders on a pro rata basis. In connection with any distribution of subscription rights to stockholders, if all of the underlying securities are not subscribed for, we may sell the unsubscribed shares of our securities directly to third parties or may engage the services of one or more underwriters, dealers or agents, including standby underwriters, to sell the unsubscribed securities to third parties.

Each prospectus supplement, to the extent applicable will describe the number and terms of the securities to which such prospectus supplement relates, the name or names of any underwriters or agents with whom we have entered into arrangement with respect to the sale of such securities, the public offering or purchase price of such securities and the net proceeds we will receive from such sale. Any underwriter or agent involved in the offer and sale of the securities will be named in the applicable prospectus supplement. We may sell securities directly to investors on our own behalf in those jurisdictions where we are authorized to do so. In order to comply with the securities laws of certain states, if applicable, the securities offered hereby will be sold in such jurisdictions only through registered or licensed brokers or dealers. In addition, in certain states securities may not be sold unless they have been registered or qualified for sale in the applicable state or an exemption from the registration or qualification requirement is available and is complied with.

Underwriters may offer and sell the securities at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to the prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices. We also may, from time to time, authorize dealers or agents to offer and sell these securities upon such terms and conditions as may be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. In connection with the sale of securities, underwriters or agents may receive compensation from us or from purchasers of securities covered by this prospectus, for whom they may act as agents, in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions. Underwriters may sell the securities to or through dealers, and such dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters or commissions from the purchasers for which they may act as agents.

Shares may also be sold in one or more of the following transactions: (a) block transactions (which may involve crosses) in which a broker-dealer may sell all or a portion of the shares as agent but may position and resell all or a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction; (b) purchases by a broker-dealer as principal and resale by the broker-dealer for its own account pursuant to a prospectus supplement; (c) a special offering, an exchange distribution or secondary distribution in accordance with applicable NYSE or other stock exchange rules; (d) ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which a broker-dealer solicits purchasers; (e) sales at the market to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise, for shares; and (f) sales in other ways not involving market maker or established trading markets, including direct sales to purchasers. Broker-dealers may also receive from purchasers of the shares compensation that is not expected to exceed that customary in the types of transactions involved.

Any underwriting compensation paid by us to underwriters or agents in connection with the offering of these securities, and any discounts or concessions or commissions allowed by underwriters to participating dealers, will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Dealers and agents that participate in the distribution of securities may be deemed to be underwriters under the Securities Act, and any discounts or commissions received by them and any profit realized by them on the resale of securities they realize may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act.

Underwriters, dealers and agents may be entitled, under agreements entered into with us, to indemnification against and contribution toward certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. Unless

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otherwise set forth in the accompanying prospectus supplement, the obligations of any underwriters to purchase any of these securities will be subject to certain conditions precedent.

In connection with the offering of the securities hereby, certain underwriters, and selling group members and their respective affiliates, may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the applicable securities. These transactions may include stabilization transactions pursuant to which these persons may bid for or purchase securities for the purpose of stabilizing their market price.

The underwriters in an offering of securities may also create a short position for their account by selling more securities in connection with the offering than they are committed to purchase from us. In that case, the underwriters could cover all or a portion of the short position by either purchasing securities in the open market following completion of the offering of these securities or by exercising any over-allotment option granted to them by us. In addition, the managing underwriter may impose penalty bids under contractual arrangements with other underwriters, which means that it can reclaim from an underwriter (or any selling group member participating in the offering) for the account of the other underwriters, the selling concession for the securities that are distributed in the offering but subsequently purchased for the account of the underwriters in the open market. Any of the transactions described in this paragraph or comparable transactions that are described in any accompanying prospectus supplement may result in the maintenance of the price of the securities at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. None of the transactions described in this paragraph or in an accompanying prospectus supplement are required to be taken by an underwriter and, if they are undertaken, may be discontinued at any time.

If indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will authorize dealers acting as our agents to solicit offers by institutions to purchase securities covered by this prospectus from us at the public offering price set forth in the relevant prospectus supplement under delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on the date or dates stated in the relevant prospectus supplement. Each delayed delivery contract will be for an amount not less than, and the aggregate principal amount of securities sold pursuant to delayed delivery contracts shall be not less nor more than, the respective amounts stated in the applicable prospectus supplement. Institutions with whom delayed delivery contracts, when authorized, may be made include commercial and savings banks, insurance companies, pension funds, investment companies, educational and charitable institutions, and other institutions, but will in all cases be subject to our approval. Delayed delivery contracts will not be subject to any conditions except (i) the purchase by an institution of the securities covered by its delayed delivery contracts may not at the time of delivery be prohibited under the laws of any jurisdiction in the United States to which the institution is subject, and (ii) if the securities are being sold to underwriters, we will be required to have sold to such underwriters the total principal amount of the securities less the principal amount thereof covered by delayed delivery contracts. The underwriters and any other agents will not have any responsibility in respect of the validity or performance of delayed delivery contracts.

Underwriters, dealers and agents may engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us and our affiliates in the ordinary course of business. Unless we specify otherwise in the related prospectus supplement, each class or series of securities will be a new issue with no established trading market, other than shares of our common stock, which is listed on the NYSE. It is possible that one or more underwriters may make a market in our securities, but will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. Therefore, no assurance can be given as to the liquidity of the trading market for our securities.

Under applicable rules and regulations under the Exchange Act, under certain circumstances a person engaged in the distribution of the securities offered under this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement may not simultaneously engage in market making activities with respect to our securities for a specified period prior to the commencement of such distribution.

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CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF MARYLAND LAW AND OF OUR CHARTER AND BYLAWS

*The following summary highlights the material provisions of Maryland law that are applicable to us and the material provisions of our charter and bylaws. You should refer to Maryland law, including the MGCL, and to our charter and our bylaws for a full description. Copies of our charter and our bylaws are incorporated herein by reference. You can also obtain copies of our charter and our bylaws and every other exhibit to our registration statement. Please see *Where You Can Find Additional Information About New Century* on page 81 below and *Risk Factors - Risks Related to Our Business*. Certain provisions of Maryland law and our charter and bylaws could hinder, delay or prevent a change in control of us.*

Classification of Board of Directors

Our bylaws provide that the number of directors may be established, increased or decreased by our board of directors but may not be fewer than the minimum number required by the MGCL (which currently is one) nor more than 15. Under our bylaws, we have elected to be subject to certain provisions of Maryland law which vest in our board of directors the exclusive right to determine the number of directors and the exclusive right, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining directors, to fill vacancies on the board of directors even if the remaining directors do not constitute a quorum. These provisions of Maryland law, which are applicable even if other provisions of Maryland law or our charter or bylaws provide to the contrary, also provide that any director elected to fill a vacancy will hold office for the remainder of the full term of the class of directors in which the vacancy occurred, rather than the next annual meeting of stockholders as would otherwise be the case, and until his or her successor is elected and qualified.

Pursuant to our charter, our board of directors is divided into three classes of directors. Beginning in 2004, directors of each class will be chosen for three-year terms upon the expiration of their current terms and each year one class of our directors will be elected by our stockholders. The initial terms of the Class II, Class III and Class I directors will expire in 2005, 2006 and 2007, respectively. We believe that classification of our board of directors will help to assure the continuity and stability of our business strategies and policies as determined by our board of directors. Holders of shares of our common stock will not have the right to cumulative voting in the election of directors. Consequently, at each annual meeting of stockholders, the holders of a majority of the shares of our common stock will be able to elect all of the successors of the class of directors whose terms expire at that meeting.

The classified board provision could have the effect of making the replacement of incumbent directors more time consuming and difficult. At least two annual meetings of stockholders, instead of one, will generally be required to effect a change in a majority of our board of directors. Thus, the classified board provision could increase the likelihood that incumbent directors will retain their positions. The staggered terms of directors may delay, deter or prevent a tender offer or an attempt to change control of us, even though a tender offer or change in control might be in the best interest of our stockholders.

Removal of Directors

Our charter provides that a director may be removed only for cause (as defined in our charter) and only by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by our stockholders generally in the election of our directors. This provision of our charter will preclude our stockholders from removing incumbent directors except upon the existence of cause for removal and a substantial affirmative vote. Also, our election in our bylaws to be subject to certain provisions of Maryland law which vest in our board of directors the exclusive right to fill vacancies on our board of directors will prevent our stockholders, even if they are successful in removing incumbent directors, from filling the vacancies created by such removal with their own nominees.

Limitation of Liability and Indemnification

The MGCL permits a Maryland corporation to include in its charter a provision limiting the liability of its directors and officers to the corporation and its stockholders for money damages except for liability resulting from:

actual receipt of an improper benefit or profit in money, property or services; or

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active and deliberate dishonesty established by a final judgment as being material to the cause of action.

Our charter contains such a provision which eliminates such liability to the maximum extent permitted by the MGCL.

Our charter and bylaws obligate us, to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law, to indemnify any person who is or was a party to, or is threatened to be made a party to, any threatened or pending proceeding by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director or officer of us, or while a director or officer of us is or was serving, at our request, as a director, officer, agent, partner or trustee of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, limited liability company, trust, real estate investment trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise. To the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law, the indemnification provided for in our charter and bylaws shall include expenses (including attorney's fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement and any such expenses may be paid or reimbursed by us in advance of the final disposition of any such proceeding.

The MGCL requires a corporation (unless its charter provides otherwise, which our charter does not) to indemnify a director or officer who has been successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any proceeding to which he is made a party by reason of his or her service in that capacity. The MGCL permits a corporation to indemnify its present and former directors and officers, among others, against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements and reasonable expenses actually incurred by them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made a party by reason of their service in those or other capacities unless it is established that:

the act or omission of the director or officer was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and (a) was committed in bad faith or (b) was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty;

the director or officer actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services; or

in the case of any criminal proceeding, the director or officer had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful.

However, under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation may not indemnify for an adverse judgment in a suit by or in the right of the corporation or for a judgment of liability on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received, unless in either case a court orders indemnification and then only for expenses. In addition, the MGCL permits a corporation to advance reasonable expenses to a director or officer upon the corporation's receipt of:

a written affirmation by the director or officer of his good faith belief that he has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification by the corporation, and

a written undertaking by or on his behalf to repay the amount paid or reimbursed by the corporation if it shall ultimately be determined that the standard of conduct was not met.

Business Combinations

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Under the MGCL, certain business combinations (including a merger, consolidation, share exchange or, in certain circumstances, an asset transfer or certain issuances or reclassifications of equity securities) between a Maryland corporation and any interested stockholder or any affiliate of an interested stockholder are prohibited for five years after the most recent date on which a person or entity becomes an interested stockholder. An interested stockholder is any person or entity who beneficially owns 10% or more of the voting power of the corporation's outstanding shares, or any affiliate of the corporation who was the beneficial owner of 10% or more of the voting power of the then-outstanding voting stock of the corporation at any time within the two-year period prior to the date in question. A person is not an interested stockholder under the statute if the board of directors approved in advance the transaction by which such person would otherwise have become an interested stockholder. After the five-year period has elapsed, any such business combination must be recommended by our board of directors and approved by the affirmative vote of at least (1) 80% of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of outstanding shares of voting stock of the corporation and (2) two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast

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by holders of voting stock of the corporation other than shares held by the interested stockholder with whom (or with whose affiliate) the business combination is to be effected, unless, among other conditions, the corporation's common stockholders receive a minimum price (as defined in the MGCL) for their shares and the consideration is received in cash or in the same form as previously paid by the interested stockholder for its shares. These provisions of the MGCL do not apply, however, to business combinations that are approved or exempted by our board of directors prior to the time that the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder.

Our board of directors has adopted a resolution exempting the company from the provisions of the MGCL relating to business combinations with interested stockholders or affiliates of interested stockholders. However, such resolution can be altered or repealed, in whole or in part, at any time by our board of directors.

Control Share Acquisitions

The MGCL provides that control shares of a Maryland corporation acquired in a control share acquisition have no voting rights except to the extent approved by a vote of two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter, excluding shares of stock owned by the acquiror, by officers or by directors who are employees of the corporation. Control shares are voting shares of stock which, if aggregated with all other such shares of stock previously acquired by the acquiror or in respect of which the acquiror is able to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power (except solely by virtue of a revocable proxy), would entitle the acquiror to exercise voting power in electing directors within one of the following ranges of voting power:

one-tenth or more, but less than one-third;

one-third or more, but less than a majority; or

a majority or more of all voting power.

Control shares do not include shares the acquiring person is then entitled to vote as a result of having previously obtained stockholder approval. A control share acquisition means the acquisition of control shares, subject to certain exceptions. A person who has made or proposes to make a control share acquisition, upon satisfaction of certain conditions (including an undertaking to pay expenses), may compel our board of directors to call a special meeting of stockholders to be held within 50 days of demand to consider the voting rights of the shares. If no request for a meeting is made, the corporation may itself present the question at any stockholders' meeting.

If voting rights are not approved at the meeting or if the acquiring person does not deliver an acquiring person statement as required by the statute, then, subject to certain conditions and limitations, the corporation may redeem any or all of the control shares (except those for which voting rights have previously been approved) for fair value determined, without regard to the absence of voting rights for the control shares, as of the date of the last control share acquisition by the acquiror or of any meeting of stockholders at which the voting rights of such shares are considered and not approved. If voting rights for control shares are approved at a stockholders' meeting and the acquirer becomes entitled to vote a majority of the shares entitled to vote, all other stockholders may exercise appraisal rights. The fair value of the shares as determined for purposes of such appraisal rights may not be less than the highest price per share paid by the acquiror in the control share acquisition.

The control share acquisition statute does not apply:

to shares acquired in a merger, consolidation or share exchange if the corporation is a party to the transaction; or

to acquisitions approved or exempted by our charter or bylaws of the corporation.

Our bylaws contain a provision exempting from the control share acquisition statute any and all acquisitions by any person of our shares of stock. We cannot assure you that such provision will not be amended or eliminated at any time in the future.

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Amendments to the Charter

Except as provided below, our charter, including its provisions on classification of our board of directors, may be amended only if approved by our stockholders by the affirmative vote of not fewer than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter. Amendments to the provisions of our charter relating to the removal of directors will be required to be approved by our stockholders by the affirmative vote at least two-thirds of all votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

Dissolution

Our dissolution must be approved by our stockholders by the affirmative vote of not fewer than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

Meetings of Stockholders; Advance Notice of Director Nominations and New Business

Annual meetings

Our annual meeting of stockholders will be held each May. Our bylaws provide that with respect to an annual meeting of stockholders, director nominations and stockholder proposals may be made only:

pursuant to our notice of the meeting;

at the direction of our board of directors; or

by a stockholder who is entitled to vote at the meeting and has complied with the advance notice procedures set forth in our bylaws.

For nominations or other proposals to be properly brought before an annual meeting of stockholders by a stockholder, the stockholder must have given timely notice in writing to our corporate secretary and any such proposal must otherwise be a proper matter for stockholder action. To be timely, a stockholder's notice must be delivered to our corporate secretary at our principal executive offices not later than the close of business on the 90th calendar day nor earlier than the close of business on the 120th calendar day prior to the first anniversary of the preceding year's annual meeting; except that in the event that the date of the annual meeting is more than 30 calendar days before or more than 60 calendar days after such anniversary date, notice by the stockholder to be timely must be so delivered not earlier than the close of business on the 120th calendar day prior to such annual meeting and not later than the close of business on the later of the 90th calendar day prior to such annual meeting or the 10th calendar day following the calendar day on which we first make a public announcement of the date of such meeting.

A stockholder's notice must set forth:

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as to each person whom the stockholder proposes to nominate for election or reelection as a director, all information relating to such person that is required to be disclosed in solicitation of proxies for election of directors in an election contest, or is otherwise required, in each case pursuant to Regulation 14A of the Exchange Act, including such person's written consent to be named as a nominee and serving as a director if elected;

as to any other business that the stockholder proposes to bring before the meeting, a brief description of the business to be brought before the meeting, the reasons for conducting such business at the meeting, and any material interest in such business of such stockholder and of any such stockholder's affiliates and of any person who is the beneficial owner, if any, of such stock; and

as to the stockholder giving notice and each beneficial owner, if any, of such stock, the name and address of such stockholder, as they appear on the company's stock ownership records, and the name and address of each beneficial owner of such stock, and the class and number of shares of stock of the company which are owned of record or beneficially by each such person.

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Special Meetings

Special meetings of our stockholders may be called only by our president or by our board of directors, unless otherwise required by law. Special meetings of our stockholders shall also be called by our secretary upon the written request of stockholders entitled to cast at least a majority of all votes entitled to be cast at such meeting. The date, time and place of any special meetings will be set by our board of directors. Our bylaws provide that with respect to special meetings of our stockholders, only the business specified in our notice of meeting may be brought before the meeting, and nominations of persons for election to our board of directors may be made only:

pursuant to our notice of the meeting;

by or at the direction of our board of directors; or

provided that our board of directors has determined that directors shall be elected at such meeting, by a stockholder who is entitled to vote at the meeting and has complied with the advance notice provisions set forth in our bylaws.

Anti-Takeover Effect of Certain Provisions of Maryland Law and of our Charter and Bylaws

If the resolution of our board of directors and the applicable provisions in our bylaws exempting us from the business combination provisions and the control share acquisition provisions of the MGCL are rescinded, the business combination provisions and the control share acquisition provisions of the MGCL, the provisions of our charter on classification of our board of directors and removal of directors, the advance notice provisions of our bylaws and certain other provisions of our charter and bylaws and the MGCL could delay, deter or prevent a change in control of us or other transactions that might involve a premium price for holders of our common stock or otherwise be in their best interest.

LEGAL MATTERS

Selected legal matters, including certain securities matters and federal tax matters, will be passed upon for us by O Melveny & Myers LLP, San Francisco, California. Certain other legal matters, including the validity of the securities offered in this prospectus and selected legal matters related to Maryland law, will be passed upon for us by Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP, Baltimore, Maryland.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of New Century Financial Corporation and subsidiaries as of December 31, 2004 and 2003, and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2004 and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2004, have been incorporated by reference herein in reliance upon the reports of KPMG LLP, Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm, incorporated by reference herein and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT NEW CENTURY

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Copies of these materials may be examined without charge at the public reference room at 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Room 1024, Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the Securities and Exchange Commission at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. You may also obtain these materials from us at no cost by directing a written or oral request to us at New Century Financial Corporation, 18400 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 1000, Irvine, California, 92612, Attention: Vice President of Investor Relations, or by telephone at (949) 440-7030, or email at cmarrell@ncen.com, or at our Web site at www.ncen.com. In addition, the Securities and Exchange Commission maintains a web site, <http://www.sec.gov>, which contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information regarding registrants, including us, that file electronically with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

We are incorporating by reference certain documents that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which means that such documents are considered part of this prospectus and that we can disclose important information to you by referring to those documents. Information that we file in the future with the Securities and Exchange Commission will automatically update and supersede earlier information in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus. Any statement in a document incorporated by reference into this prospectus will be deemed to be modified or superseded to the extent a statement contained in this prospectus or any subsequently filed document that is incorporated by reference into this prospectus modified or supersedes such statement. Any statement that is modified or superseded shall not, except as so modified or superseded, constitute part of this prospectus.

We incorporate herein by reference the documents listed below and any other information we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, including any filings after the date of this prospectus until the offering is completed:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2004, filed on March 16, 2005;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K, filed on January 5, 2005, January 7, 2005, January 13, 2005, February 3, 2005, February 14, 2005, February 18, 2005, March 3, 2005, March 11, 2005 and April 5, 2005; and

the description of our common stock contained in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 30, 2004, and any other amendment or report filed for the purpose of updating such description.

In addition, we also incorporate by reference into this prospectus additional information that we may subsequently file with the Securities and Exchange Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 and 15(d) of the Exchange Act prior to the termination of the offering. These documents include Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and Current Reports on Form 8-K, as well as proxy statements.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, unless specifically stated to the contrary, none of the information that we disclose under Items 2.02 and 7.02 of any Current Report on Form 8-K that we may from time to time furnish to the Securities and Exchange Commission will be incorporated by reference into, or otherwise included in, this prospectus.

We are subject to the information and reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, and file periodic reports, proxy statements and we make available to our stockholders annual reports containing audited financial information for each year and quarterly reports for the first three quarters of each fiscal year containing unaudited interim financial information.

You may not have some of the documents incorporated by reference, but you can obtain any of them through the Securities and Exchange Commission as described above or from us at no cost by directing a written or oral request to us at New Century Financial Corporation, 18400 Von Karman, Suite 1000, Irvine, California, 92612, Attention: Vice President of Investor Relations, or by telephone at (949) 440-7030, or email at cmarrell@ncen.com, or at our Web site at www.ncen.com. Except for the documents described above, information on our Web site is not otherwise incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

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You should rely only on the information in this prospectus or incorporated by reference into this prospectus. No one has been authorized to provide you with different information. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front page. We are not making any offer to sell (or soliciting any offer to buy) any securities, or soliciting any proxy, in any state where it is unlawful to do so.

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\$1,000,000,000

Common Stock

Preferred Stock

Depositary Shares

Debt Securities

Warrants

PROSPECTUS

April , 2005

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The following table sets forth an estimate of the fees and expenses payable by the Registrant in connection with the registration of our securities offered hereby. All of such fees and expenses, except for the Registration Fee, are estimated:

Registration Fee Securities and Exchange Commission	\$ 117,700
Accounting Fees and Expenses	4,000
Legal Fees and Expenses	75,000
Printing Fees and Expenses	10,000
Trustee and Transfer Agent Fees	0
Miscellaneous	13,300
	<hr/>
Total	\$ 220,000
	<hr/>

ITEM 15. INDEMNIFICATION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Our charter and bylaws require us to indemnify our directors and officers to the fullest extent required or permitted by law and to indemnify other employees and agents to such extent as may be authorized by our board of directors. The Maryland General Corporation Law, or the MGCL, requires a corporation (unless its charter provides otherwise, which our charter does not) to indemnify a director or officer who has been successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any proceeding to which he is made a party by reason of his service in that capacity. The MGCL permits a corporation to indemnify its present and former directors and officers, among others, against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements and reasonable expenses actually incurred by them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made a party by reason of their service in those or other capacities unless it is established that (a) the act or omission of the director or officer was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and (i) was committed in bad faith or (ii) was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty, (b) the director or officer actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services or (c) in the case of any criminal proceeding, the director or officer had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful. However, under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation may not indemnify for an adverse judgment in a suit by or in the right of the corporation or for a judgment of liability on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received, unless in either case a court orders indemnification and then only for expenses. In addition, the MGCL permits a corporation to advance reasonable expenses to a director or officer upon the receipt by the corporation of (a) a written affirmation by the director or officer of his good faith belief that he has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification by the corporation and (b) a written undertaking by or on his behalf to repay the amount paid or reimbursed by the corporation if it shall ultimately be determined that the standard of conduct was not met.

We have entered into agreements with our directors and officers pursuant to which we have agreed to indemnify such directors and officers from claims, liabilities, damages, expenses, losses, costs, penalties or amounts paid in settlement incurred by such directors or officers in or arising out of their capacities as a director, officer, employee and/or agent of the applicable company or any other corporation of which such person is a director or officer at the request of the applicable company to the maximum extent provided by applicable law. In addition, such directors or officers are entitled to an advance of expenses to the maximum extent authorized or permitted by law.

At present, there is no pending litigation or proceeding involving our directors or officers as to which indemnification is being sought nor are we aware of any threatened litigation that may result in claims for indemnification by any officer or director.

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We will maintain directors and officers liability insurance coverage for our directors and officers providing coverage for damages, judgments, settlements, defense costs, charges and expenses incurred by reason of any actual or alleged breach of duty, error, misstatement, misleading statement or omission done or made in their capacities as directors and/or officers of New Century Financial Corporation.

The foregoing summaries are necessarily subject to the complete text of the MGCL, our charter documents, the indemnity agreements entered into between us and each of our directors and officers and our directors' and officers' liability insurance policy and are qualified in the entirety by reference thereto.

ITEM 16. EXHIBITS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT SCHEDULES**(a) EXHIBITS**

Exhibit	
Number	Description
1.1**	Form of Underwriting Agreement
4.1***	Registrant's Articles of Amendment and Restatement
4.2***	Registrant's Amended and Restated Bylaws
4.3****	Registrant's Articles Supplementary
4.4*****	Specimen Certificate for the Registrant's Common Stock
4.5*	Form of Senior Debt Indenture
4.6*	Form of Subordinated Debt Indenture
5.1*	Opinion of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll LLP regarding legality of securities being registered
8.1*	Opinion of O Melveny & Myers LLP regarding certain tax matters
12.1*	Statement re: Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges
23.1*	Consent of KPMG LLP, Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm
23.2*	Consent of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll LLP (included as part of Exhibit 5.1)
23.3*	Consent of O Melveny & Myers LLP (included as part of Exhibit 8.1)
24.1	Power of Attorney
25.1**	Statement of Eligibility of Trustee under Indenture

* Filed herewith.

** To be filed by registrant as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.

*** Incorporated herein by reference to Registrant's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q, as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on November 9, 2004.

**** Incorporated herein by reference to Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K, as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 1, 2004.

***** Incorporated herein by reference to the joint filing of the Registrant's Form S-3 Registration Statement (No. 333-119753) and New Century TRS Holdings, Inc.'s Post-Effective Amendment No. 3 to Form S-3 Registration Statement (No. 333-109727), as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 14, 2004.

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Included on the signature page to this Registration Statement.

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(b) FINANCIAL STATEMENT SCHEDULES

None.

ITEM 17. UNDERTAKINGS

(a) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

1. To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:

(i) to include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;

(ii) to reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in the volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in this form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee Table in the effective registration statement; and

(iii) to include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement;

provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) do not apply if the registration statement is on Form S-3, Form S-8 or Form F-3, and the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(b) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934) that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities being offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

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/s/ HAROLD A. BLACK

Director

April 26, 2005

Harold A. Black

/s/ FREDRIC J. FORSTER

Director

April 26, 2005

Fredric J. Forster

/s/ DONALD E. LANGE

Director

April 26, 2005

Donald E. Lange

/s/ WILLIAM J. POPEJOY

Director

April 26, 2005

William J. Popejoy

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<u>Signature</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
/s/ MICHAEL M. SACHS <hr/> Michael M. Sachs	Director	April 26, 2005
/s/ TERRENCE P. SANDVIK <hr/> Terrence P. Sandvik	Director	April 26, 2005
/s/ RICHARD A. ZONA <hr/> Richard A. Zona	Director	April 26, 2005

Table of Contents**EXHIBIT INDEX**

Pursuant to Item 601(a)(2) of Regulation S-K, this exhibit index immediately precedes the exhibits.

The following exhibits are included, or incorporated by reference, in this Form S-3 (and are numbered in accordance with Item 601 of Regulation S-K).

Exhibit	
Number	Description
1.1**	Form of Underwriting Agreement
4.1***	Registrant's Articles of Amendment and Restatement
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