

BEAR STEARNS COMPANIES INC
 Form 424B5
 December 12, 2005

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This preliminary pricing supplement relates to an effective registration statement under the Securities Act of 1933, but is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary pricing supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities and are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any state where such an offer or sale would not be permitted.

Subject to Completion, dated December 12, 2005

PRICING SUPPLEMENT
 (To Prospectus Dated February 2, 2005 and
 Prospectus Supplement Dated February 2, 2005)

The Bear Stearns Companies Inc.

\$([]) Principal Protected Notes Linked to the Decline, if any, in the Value of the Japanese Yen Against the United States Dollar Due July [], 2007

The Notes are fully principal protected if held to maturity and are linked to the potential decline in the value of the Japanese yen (the official currency of Japan) against the United States dollar (the "U.S. dollar"). The relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar is expressed as the number of Japanese yen which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar (the "Exchange Rate"). The Exchange Rate increases as the Japanese yen depreciates against the U.S. dollar. When we refer to Notes in this pricing supplement, we mean Notes with a principal amount of \$1,000. On the Maturity Date you will receive the Cash Settlement Value, an amount in cash depending on the relation of the Final Exchange Rate to the Initial Exchange Rate. The Notes will allow you to participate in [200]% of the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar based upon an increase in the quoted Exchange Rate of Japanese yen per U.S. dollar. Upon maturity of the Notes, you will receive the Cash Settlement Value in U.S. dollars, a cash amount that depends upon the relation of the Final Exchange Rate to the Initial Exchange Rate. If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is greater than or equal to the Initial Exchange Rate, the Cash Settlement Value will equal the principal amount of Notes, plus:

If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is less than the Initial Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, if the value of the Japanese yen appreciates against the U.S. dollar), the Cash Settlement Value will be \$1,000. Because the Notes are principal protected if held to maturity, in no event will the Cash Settlement Value be less than \$1,000 per Note.

The CUSIP number for the Notes is 073928M67.

INVESTMENT IN THE NOTES INVOLVES CERTAIN RISKS. THERE MAY NOT BE A SECONDARY MARKET IN THE NOTES, AND IF THERE WERE TO BE A SECONDARY MARKET, IT MAY NOT BE LIQUID. YOU SHOULD REFER TO "RISK FACTORS" BEGINNING ON PAGE PS-11.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of the Notes or determined that this pricing supplement, or the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus, is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

	<u>Per Note</u>	<u>Total</u>
Initial public offering price	[]%	\$[]
Agent's discount	[]%	\$[]
Proceeds, before expenses, to us	[]%	\$[]

We may grant the agents a 30-day option from the date of the final pricing supplement, to purchase from us up to an additional \$[] of Notes at the public offering price, less the agent's discount, to cover any over-allotments.

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We expect that the Notes will be ready for delivery in book-entry form only through the book-entry facilities of The Depository Trust Company in New York, New York, on or about January [], 2006, against payment in immediately available funds. The distribution of the Notes will conform to the requirements set forth in Rule 2720 of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. Conduct Rules.

Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.

January [], 2006

SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information from the accompanying prospectus and prospectus supplement and this pricing supplement to help you understand the Notes linked to the decline, if any, in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar. You should carefully read this entire pricing supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus to fully understand the terms of the Notes, as well as the principal tax and other considerations that are important to you in making a decision about whether to invest in the Notes. You should carefully review the section "Risk Factors" in this pricing supplement and "Risk Factors" in the accompanying prospectus supplement, which highlights a number of significant risks, to determine whether an investment in the Notes is appropriate for you. All of the information set forth below is qualified in its entirety by the more detailed explanation set forth elsewhere in this pricing supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus. If information in this pricing supplement is inconsistent with the prospectus or prospectus supplement, this pricing supplement will supersede those documents. In this pricing supplement, the terms "Company," "we," "us" and "our" refer only to The Bear Stearns Companies Inc., excluding its consolidated subsidiaries.

The Bear Stearns Companies Inc. Medium-Term Notes, Series B, Principal Protected Notes, linked to the decline, if any, in the value of the Japanese yen against the United States dollar, Due July [], 2007 (the "Notes") are Notes the return of which is tied or "linked" to the potential decline in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar. The relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar is expressed as the number of Japanese yen which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar (the "Exchange Rate"). The Exchange Rate increases as the Japanese yen depreciates against the U.S. dollar. When we refer to Notes in this pricing supplement, we mean Notes with a principal amount of \$1,000. Unlike typical bonds, no periodic interest payments will be made on these Notes prior to maturity. The Notes are principal protected only if held to maturity and will allow you to participate in [200]% of the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar based upon an increase in the quoted Exchange Rate of Japanese yen per U.S. dollar. At maturity, if the Final Exchange Rate is greater than or equal to the Initial Exchange Rate, the Cash Settlement Value will equal the principal amount of Notes, plus:

At maturity, if the Final Exchange Rate is less than the Initial Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, if the value of the Japanese yen appreciates against the U.S. dollar), the Cash Settlement Value will be \$1,000. Because the Notes are principal protected if held to maturity, in no event will the Cash Settlement Value be less than \$1,000 per Note.

Selected Investment Considerations

Potential leverage in the increase, if any, in the Exchange Rate The Notes may be an attractive investment for investors who have a bullish view of the Exchange Rate in the short term (*i.e.*, who anticipate that the value of the Japanese yen will depreciate against the U.S. dollar). If held to maturity, the Notes allow you to participate in [200]% of the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar based upon an increase in the quoted Exchange Rate of Japanese yen per U.S. dollar.

Principal protection If the Japanese yen appreciates against the U.S. dollar, the Cash Settlement Value will be \$1,000. Because the Notes are principal protected if held to maturity, in no event will you receive a Cash Settlement Value less than \$1,000 per Note.

No current income We will not pay any interest on the Notes. The yield on the Notes may be less than the overall return you would earn if you purchased a conventional debt security at the same time and with the same maturity.

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Diversification The Exchange Rate represents the relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar, and the Notes may appreciate if such Exchange Rate increases; *i.e.*, if the value of the Japanese yen depreciates against the U.S. dollar. Therefore, the Notes may allow you to diversify an existing portfolio or investment.

Low minimum investment The minimum purchase is \$1,000, with increments of \$1,000 thereafter.

Selected Risk Considerations

Possible loss of value in the secondary market Your principal investment in the Notes is protected only if you hold your Notes to maturity. If you sell your Notes prior to the Maturity Date, you may receive less, and possibly significantly less, than the amount you originally invested.

No interest, dividend or other payments During the term of the Notes, you will not receive any periodic interest or other distributions; nor will such payments be included in the calculation of the Cash Settlement Value you will receive at maturity.

The Notes will not be listed on any securities exchange. You should be aware that we cannot ensure that a secondary market in the Notes will develop; and, if such market were to develop, it may not be liquid. Our subsidiary, Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. ("Bear Stearns") has advised us that they intend, under ordinary market conditions, to indicate prices for the Notes on request. However, we cannot guarantee that bids for outstanding Notes will be made in the future; nor can we predict the price at which any such bids will be made. In any event, any such market-making activities will cease as of the close of business on the Maturity Date.

Taxes For U.S. federal income tax purposes, we intent to treat the Notes as contingent payment debt instruments. As a result, you will be required to include original issue discount ("OID") in income during your ownership of the Notes even though you will receive no cash payments with respect to the Notes until maturity. Additionally, you will generally be required to recognize ordinary income on the gain, if any, realized on a sale, upon maturity, or other disposition of the Notes. You should review the discussion under the section entitled "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations" in this pricing supplement.

KEY TERMS

Issuer:	The Bear Stearns Companies Inc.
Exchange Rate:	The relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar as expressed as the number of Japanese yen which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar, as determined at the 10 a.m. (New York time) Federal Reserve Bank of New York midpoint fixing for JPY per USD exchange rate as published on Reuters Screen Page "1 FED" and on Bloomberg as TNFXJY <Index> (the "Exchange Rate").
Face Amount:	Each Note will be issued in minimum denominations of \$1,000 and in \$1,000 increments in excess thereafter. When we refer to Notes in this pricing supplement, we mean Notes with a principal amount of \$1,000.
Cash Settlement Value:	<p>At maturity, we will pay you the Cash Settlement Value, an amount in cash per Note, in U.S. dollars, that is based upon the Final Exchange Rate in relation to the Initial Exchange Rate. The Notes will allow you to participate in [200]% of the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar based upon an increase in the quoted Exchange Rate of Japanese yen per U.S. dollar. In no event will the Cash Settlement Value be less than \$1,000.</p> <p>If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is greater than or equal to the Initial Exchange Rate, the Cash Settlement Value will equal the principal amount of the Notes, plus:</p> <p>If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is less than the Initial Exchange Rate (<i>i.e.</i>, if the value of the Japanese yen appreciates against the U.S. dollar), the Cash Settlement Value will be \$1,000. Because the Notes are principal protected if held to maturity, in no event will the Cash Settlement Value be less than \$1,000.</p>
Initial Exchange Rate:	Equals [], the Exchange Rate on January [], 2006, the date the Notes were priced for initial sale to the public.
Final Exchange Rate:	Will be determined by the Calculation Agent and will equal the Exchange Rate on July [], 2007, the "Calculation Date," or, if that day is not a Currency Business Day, the next Currency Business Day shall be the Calculation Date. If there is a Currency Disruption Event or a discontinuance of the Exchange Rate or the Calculation Agent is unable to determine the Final Exchange Rate or Successor Exchange Rate for two consecutive Currency Business Days, the Final Exchange Rate shall be determined as described in "Description of the Notes."
Maturity Date:	The Notes will mature on July [], 2007.
Exchange Rate Closing Level:	The Exchange Rate on each Currency Business Day.
Interest:	The Notes will not bear interest.

Exchange Listing:

The Notes will not be listed on any securities exchange.

Currency Business Day:

Will be a day, as determined by the Calculation Agent in its sole discretion, other than a Saturday or Sunday, on which commercial banks are open for business (including dealings in foreign exchange and foreign currency deposits) in the principal financial centers in the U.S. and Japan.

Calculation Agent:

Bear Stearns Forex Inc. All determinations made by the Calculation Agent will be at the sole discretion of the Calculation Agent and will be conclusive for all purposes and binding on us and the beneficial owners of the Notes, absent manifest error.

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Offers and sales of the Notes are subject to restrictions in certain jurisdictions. The distribution of this pricing supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus and the offer or sale of the Notes in certain other jurisdictions may be restricted by law. Persons who come into possession of this pricing supplement, and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus or any Notes must inform themselves about and observe any applicable restrictions on the distribution of this pricing supplement, the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus and the offer and sale of the Notes. Notwithstanding the minimum denomination of \$1,000, the minimum purchase for any purchaser domiciled in a Member State of the European Union shall be \$100,000.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What are the Notes?

The Notes are a series of our senior debt securities, the value of which is linked to the performance of the Exchange Rate. The Notes will not bear interest, and no other payments will be made prior to maturity. See the section "Risk Factors."

The Notes will be unsecured and will rank equally with all of our unsecured and unsubordinated debt. Because we are a holding company, the Notes will be effectively subordinated to the claims of creditors of our subsidiaries. At August 31, 2005:

we had outstanding (on an unconsolidated basis) approximately \$51.1 billion of debt and other obligations, including approximately \$46.8 billion of unsecured senior debt and senior obligations and \$4.2 billion of unsecured inter-company debt; and

our subsidiaries had outstanding (after elimination of inter-company items) approximately \$228.4 billion of senior debt and other senior obligations (including \$65.6 billion related to securities sold under repurchase agreements, \$75.5 billion related to payables to customers, \$32.6 billion related to financial instruments sold, but not yet purchased, and \$54.7 billion of other liabilities, including \$25.7 billion of debt).

The Notes will mature on July [], 2007. The Notes do not provide for earlier redemption. When we refer to Notes in this pricing supplement, we mean Notes with a principal amount of \$1,000. You should refer to the section "Description of Notes."

Are the Notes equity or debt securities?

The Notes are our unsecured debt securities. The Notes are principal protected only if held to maturity. However, the Notes differ from traditional debt securities in that the Notes may offer [200]% of the positive performance of the Exchange Rate, if any, (*i.e.*, of the potential depreciation in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar).

What will I receive at Maturity of the Notes?

We have designed the Notes for investors who want to protect a substantial portion of their investment by receiving at least 100% of the principal amount of their Notes at maturity, while also having an opportunity to participate in the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar based upon an increase in the quoted Exchange Rate of Japanese yen per U.S. dollar. Upon maturity of the Notes, for each Note you own, you will receive a payment equal to the "Cash Settlement Value," an amount in cash per Note, in U.S. dollars, that is based upon the Final Exchange Rate in relation to the Initial Exchange Rate.

The Notes will allow you to participate in [200]% of the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar based upon an increase in the quoted Exchange Rate of Japanese yen per U.S.

dollar. If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is greater than or equal to the Initial Exchange Rate, the Cash Settlement Value will equal the principal amount of the Notes, plus:

If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is less than the Initial Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, if the value of the Japanese yen appreciates against the U.S. dollar), the Cash Settlement Value will be \$1,000. Because the Notes are principal protected if held to maturity, in no event will the Cash Settlement Value be less than \$1,000.

The "Exchange Rate" means the relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar as expressed as the number of Japanese yen which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar, as determined at the 10 a.m. (New York time) Federal Reserve Bank of New York midpoint fixing for JPY per USD exchange rate as published on Reuters Screen Page "1 FED" and on Bloomberg as TNFXJY <Index> (the "Exchange Rate").

The "Initial Exchange Rate" equals [], the Exchange Rate on January [], 2006, the date the Notes were priced for initial sale to the public.

The "Final Exchange Rate" will be determined by the Calculation Agent and will equal the Exchange Rate on July [], 2007, the "Calculation Date," or, if that day is not a Currency Business Day, the next Currency Business Day shall be the Calculation Date. If there is a Currency Disruption Event or a discontinuance of the Exchange Rate or the Calculation Agent is unable to determine the Final Exchange Rate or Successor Exchange Rate for two consecutive Currency Business Days, the Final Exchange Rate shall be determined as described in "Description of the Notes."

The "Maturity Date" of the Notes is July [], 2007.

The "Exchange Rate Closing Level" is the Exchange Rate on each Currency Business Day.

A "Currency Business Day" will be a day, as determined by the Calculation Agent in its sole discretion, other than a Saturday or Sunday, on which commercial banks are open for business (including dealings in foreign exchange and foreign currency deposits) in the principal financial centers in the U.S. and Japan.

For more specific information about the Cash Settlement Value and for illustrative examples, you should refer to the section "Description of the Notes."

Will there be additional offering of the Notes?

Under certain limited circumstances, and at our sole discretion, we may offer further issuances of the Notes. These further issuances, if any, will be consolidated to form a single series with the Notes and will have the same CUSIP number and will trade interchangeably with the Notes immediately upon settlement. Any additional issuance will increase the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding Notes of this series to include the aggregate principal amount of any Notes bearing the same CUSIP number that are issued pursuant to (i) any 30-day option we grant to Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc., and (ii) any future issuances of Notes bearing the same CUSIP number. The price of any additional offerings will be determined at the time of pricing of each offering, which will be a function of the prevailing market conditions and level of the Exchange Rate at the time of the relevant sale.

We will treat any additional offerings of Notes as part of the same issue as the Notes for US federal income tax purposes. Accordingly, for purposes of the Treasury regulations governing original issue discount on debt instruments, we will treat any additional offerings of Notes as having the same issue date, the same issue price and, with respect to Holders, the same adjusted issue price as the Notes. Consequently, the "issue price" of any additional offering of Notes for U.S. federal income tax

purposes will be the first price at which a substantial amount of the Notes were sold to the public (excluding sales to bond houses, brokers, or similar persons or organizations acting in the capacity of underwriters, placement agents, or wholesalers). If we offer further issuances of the Notes, we will disclose the treatment of any relevant accrued interest.

What does "principal protected" mean?

"Principal protected" means that your principal investment in the Notes will not be at risk as a result of a decrease in the Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, appreciation in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar), provided the Notes are held to maturity. At maturity, if the Final Exchange Rate is less than the Initial Exchange Rate, the Cash Settlement Value will be \$1,000. You may receive less than the principal amount of the Notes if you sell your Notes prior to maturity.

Will I receive interest on the Notes?

You will not receive any interest payments on the Notes, but will instead receive the Cash Settlement Value upon maturity of the Notes. We have designed the Notes for investors who are willing to forgo periodic interest payments on the Notes in exchange for the ability to participate in the increase, if any, in the value of the Exchange Rate over the term of the Notes (*i.e.*, in the depreciation, if any, in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar).

What is the Exchange Rate?

The Exchange Rate is the relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar, and is expressed as the number of Japanese yen which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar. If the Japanese yen depreciates against the U.S. dollar, the Exchange Rate increases, because it takes more Japanese yen to purchase one U.S. dollar.

For more specific information about the Exchange Rate, please see the section "Description of the Exchange Rate."

How has the Exchange Rate performed historically?

We have provided a graph showing the performance of the Exchange Rate during the period from January 4, 1971 through November 21, 2005. You can find these tables in the section "Description of the Exchange Rate Historical Data on the Exchange Rate" in this pricing supplement. We have provided this historical information to help you evaluate the behavior of the Exchange Rate in various economic environments; however, please note that past performance is not necessarily indicative of how the Exchange Rate will perform in the future. You should refer to the section "Risk Factors The historical performance of the Exchange Rate is not an indication of the future performance of the Exchange Rate."

Will the Notes be listed on a securities exchange?

The Notes will not be listed on any securities exchange; and we do not expect a secondary market to develop, which may affect the price that you receive for your Notes upon any sale prior to maturity. Bear Stearns has advised us that they intend, under ordinary market conditions, to indicate prices for the Notes on request. However, we cannot guarantee that bids for outstanding Notes will be made in the future; nor can we predict the price at which those bids will be made. In any event, any market-making transactions in the Notes will cease as of the close of business on the Maturity Date. You should refer to the section "Risk Factors."

What is the role of Bear Stearns?

Bear Stearns will be our agent for the offering and sale of the Notes. After the initial offering, Bear Stearns intends, under ordinary market conditions, to buy and sell the Notes to create a secondary market for holders of the Notes and may stabilize or maintain the market price of the Notes during the initial distribution of the Notes. However, Bear Stearns will not be obligated to engage in any of these market activities or to continue them once they are begun.

Who will act as Calculation Agent?

Bear Stearns Forex Inc. will be our Calculation Agent for purposes of calculating the Cash Settlement Value. Under certain circumstances, these duties could result in a conflict of interest between Bear Stearns Forex Inc.'s status as our subsidiary and its responsibilities as Calculation Agent. You should refer to "Risk Factors The Calculation Agent is our affiliate which could result in a conflict of interest."

Can you tell me more about The Bear Stearns Companies Inc.?

We are a holding company that, through our broker-dealer and international bank subsidiaries, principally Bear Stearns, Bear, Stearns Securities Corp., Bear, Stearns International Limited ("BSIL") and Bear Stearns Bank plc, is a leading investment banking, securities and derivatives trading, clearance and brokerage firm serving corporations, governments, institutional and individual investors worldwide. For more information about us, please refer to the section "The Bear Stearns Companies Inc." in the accompanying prospectus. You should also read the other documents we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which you can find by referring to the section "Where You Can Find More Information" in the accompanying prospectus.

Who should consider purchasing the Notes?

Because the Notes are tied to the decline, if any, in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar, they may be appropriate for investors with specific investment horizons who seek to participate in the potential decline of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar. In particular, the Notes may be an attractive investment for investors who:

want exposure to the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar;

believe that the Exchange Rate will increase over the term of the Notes (*i.e.*, that the value of the Japanese yen will depreciate against the U.S. dollar);

do not want to place their principal at risk and are willing to hold the Notes until maturity; and

are willing to forgo interest payments or any other payments in return for full principal protection if held to maturity and potential leverage of [200]%.

The Notes may not be a suitable investment for you if:

you seek current income or dividend payments from your investment;

you seek an investment with an active secondary market;

you are unable or unwilling to hold the Notes until maturity; or

you do not have a bearish view of the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar over the term of the Notes.

What are the U.S. federal income tax consequences of investing in the Notes?

Because we intend to treat the Notes as contingent payment debt instruments for federal income tax purposes that are not subject to the special rules for nonfunctional currency contingent payment debt instruments, a U.S. Holder of a Note will be required to include OID in gross income over the term of the Note even though no cash payments will be made with respect to the Notes until maturity. The amount of OID includible in each year is based on the "comparable yield." In addition, we have computed a "projected payment schedule" that produces the comparable yield. The comparable yield and the projected payment schedule are neither predictions nor guarantees of the actual yield on the Notes or the actual payment at maturity. If the amount we actually pay at maturity is, in fact, less than the projected maturity payment, then a U.S. Holder would have recognized taxable income in periods prior to maturity that exceeds the U.S. Holder's economic income from holding the Note during such periods (with an offsetting ordinary loss). If a U.S. Holder disposes of the Note prior to maturity, the U.S. Holder will be required to treat any gain recognized upon the disposition of the Note as ordinary income (rather than capital gain). You should review the discussion under the section entitled "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations" in this pricing supplement.

Does ERISA impose any limitations on purchases of the Notes?

An employee benefit plan subject to the fiduciary responsibility provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 ("ERISA") or a plan that is subject to Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code, including individual retirement accounts, individual retirement annuities or Keogh plans, or any entity the assets of which are deemed to be "plan assets" under ERISA regulations, will be permitted to purchase, hold and dispose of the Notes only on the condition that such plan or entity makes the deemed representation that its purchase, holding and disposition of the Notes will not constitute a prohibited transaction under ERISA or Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code for which an exemption is not available. Government plans subject to any substantially similar law will also be subject to this condition.

Are there any risks associated with my investment?

Yes. The Notes are subject to a number of risks. You should refer to the section "Risk Factors" in this pricing supplement and "Risk Factors" in the accompanying prospectus supplement.

RISK FACTORS

Your investment in the Notes involves a degree of risk similar to investing in a put option (right to sell Japanese yen at a specified price in the future for exchange back into U.S. dollars at that same time). The Notes are principal protected if held to maturity. You will be subject to significant risks not associated with conventional fixed-rate or floating-rate debt securities. Prospective purchasers of the Notes should understand the risks of investing in the Notes and should reach an investment decision only after careful consideration, with their advisers, of the suitability of the Notes in light of their particular financial circumstances, the following risk factors and the other information set forth in this pricing supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus. These risks include the possibility that the Exchange Rate will fluctuate, and the possibility that you will receive a lower amount of principal if the Notes are sold prior to maturity. We have no control over a number of matters, including economic, financial, regulatory, geographical, judicial and political events, that are important in determining the existence, magnitude, and longevity of these risks and their impact on the value of, or the payment made on, the Notes.

At maturity, the Notes may not pay more than the principal amount.

The Cash Settlement Value will be greater than your initial principal investment only if the Final Exchange Rate is greater than the Initial Exchange Rate; *i.e.*, if the Japanese yen depreciates in value against the U.S. dollar. The Cash Settlement Value will equal at least the principal amount of your Notes only if you hold your Notes to maturity. If you sell your Notes in the secondary market prior to maturity, you will not be entitled to principal protection and you may receive less, and possibly significantly less, than the initial public offering price of \$1,000 per Note. You therefore should be able and willing to hold your Notes until maturity.

You will not receive any interest payments on the Notes.

You will not receive any periodic payments of interest or any other periodic payments on the Notes until maturity. On the Maturity Date, you will receive a payment per Note equal to the Cash Settlement Value. Thus, the overall return you earn on your Notes may be less than that you would have earned by investing in a non-currency-related debt security of comparable maturity that bears interest at a prevailing market rate and is principal protected. For more specific information about the Cash Settlement Value and for illustrative examples, you should refer to the section "Description of the Notes."

Your yield may be below market interest rates on the Calculation Date.

You may receive a Cash Settlement Value that is below what we would pay as of the issuance date if we had issued non-callable senior debt securities with a maturity similar to that of the Notes.

The Notes are subject to foreign exchange risk.

The relationship between the U.S. dollar and the Japanese yen varies based on the number of interrelated factors, including economic, financial and political events or actions that we cannot control. The value of the Japanese yen, which depends on the supply and demand for the Japanese yen and U.S. dollar, may be affected by political, economic, legal, accounting and tax matters specific to Japan and the United States. These matters, among other things, the possibility that exchange controls with respect to the Japanese yen and U.S. dollar could be imposed or modified, the possible imposition of regulatory controls or taxes, the overall growth and performance of the economies of the U.S. and Japan, the trade and current account balance between the U.S. and Japan, market interventions by the Federal Reserve Board or the central banks of the U.S. and Japan, inflation, interest rate levels, the performance of the stock markets in the U.S. and Japan, the stability of the governments and banking

systems of the U.S. and Japan, wars in which the U.S. and Japan are directly or indirectly involved or that occur anywhere in the world, major natural disasters in the U.S. and Japan, and other foreseeable and unforeseeable events. In addition, the value of the Japanese yen may be affected by the operation of, and the identity of persons and entities trading on, interbank and interdealer foreign exchange markets in the U.S. and elsewhere. There can be no assurance that the value of the Japanese yen relative to the U.S. dollar on the Calculation Date will be lower than the values of the Japanese yen relative to the U.S. dollar that were used to determine the Initial Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, that the value of the Japanese yen will depreciate against the U.S. dollar).

You must rely on your own evaluation of the merits of an investment linked to the Exchange Rate.

In the ordinary course of our business, we may from time to time express views on expected movements in the foreign currency markets and in the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates. These views may vary over differing time horizons and are subject to change without notice. Moreover, other professionals who deal in the currency markets may at any time have views that differ significantly from ours. In connection with your purchase of the Notes, you should investigate the foreign currency markets and the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates and not rely on our views with respect to future movements in these markets. You should make such investigation as you deem appropriate as to the merits of an investment linked to the Exchange Rate.

The liquidity, trading value and Cash Settlement Value under the Notes could be affected by the actions of the governments of the United States and Japan.

Exchange rates of most economically developed nations, including those of Japan, are "floating," meaning the rate is permitted to fluctuate in value relative to the U.S. dollar. However, governments, from time to time, may not allow their currencies to float freely in response to economic forces. Moreover, governments, including those of the United States and Japan, use a variety of techniques, such as intervention by their central bank or imposition of regulatory controls or taxes, to affect the exchange rates of their respective currencies. Governments may also issue a new currency to replace an existing currency or alter the exchange rate or relative exchange characteristics by devaluation or revaluation of a currency. Thus, a special risk in purchasing the Notes is that their liquidity, trading value and Cash Settlement Value could be affected by the actions of sovereign governments which could change or interfere with currency valuation and the movement of currencies across borders. There will be no adjustment or change in the terms of the Notes in the event that exchange rates should become fixed, or in the event of any devaluation or revaluation or imposition of exchange or other regulatory controls or taxes, or in the event of the issuance of a replacement currency or in the event of any other development affecting the Japanese yen or the U.S. dollar.

The Japanese Yen and U.S. Dollar are traded around-the-clock; however, if a secondary market develops, the Notes may trade only during regular trading hours in the United States.

The interdealer market for the Japanese yen and U.S. dollar is a global, around-the-clock market. Therefore, the hours of trading for the Notes may not conform to the hours during which the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar are traded. To the extent that U.S. markets are closed while markets for the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar remain open, significant price and rate movements may take place in the underlying foreign exchange markets that will not be reflected immediately in the price of the Notes. There is no systematic reporting of last-sale information for foreign currencies. Reasonable current bid and offer information is available in certain brokers' offices and to others who wish to subscribe for this information, but this information will not necessarily reflect the spot rate relevant for determining the value of the Notes. The absence of last-sale information and the limited availability of quotations to individual investors make it difficult for many investors to obtain timely, accurate data about the state of the underlying foreign exchange markets.

Tax consequences.

For U.S. federal income tax purposes, we intend to treat the Notes as contingent payment debt instruments. As a result, U.S. Holders will be required to include OID in income during their ownership of the Notes even though no cash payments will be made with respect to the Notes until maturity. The amount of OID includible in each year is based on the "comparable yield." In addition, we have computed a "projected payment schedule" that produces the comparable yield. The comparable yield and the projected payment schedule are neither predictions nor guarantees of the actual yield on the Notes or the actual payment at maturity. If the amount we actually pay at maturity is, in fact, less than the projected maturity payment, then a U.S. Holder would have recognized taxable income in periods prior to maturity that exceeds the U.S. Holder's economic income from holding the Note during such periods (with an offsetting ordinary loss). Additionally, U.S. Holders will generally be required to recognize ordinary income on the gain, if any, realized on a sale, upon maturity, or other disposition of the Notes. You should review the discussion under the section entitled "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations" in this pricing supplement.

The historical performance of the Exchange Rate is not an indication of the future performance of the Exchange Rate.

The historical performance of the Exchange Rate, which is included in this pricing supplement, should not be taken as an indication of the future performance of the Exchange Rate. It is impossible to predict whether the value of the Exchange Rate will fall or rise. The Exchange Rate will be influenced by the complex and interrelated economic, financial, regulatory, geographical, judicial, political and other factors that can affect the capital markets generally and currency trading market in particular, and by various circumstances that can affect or the value of a particular currency in relation to another currency.

The price at which you will be able to sell your Notes prior to maturity will depend on a number of factors and may be substantially less than you had originally invested.

If you wish to liquidate your investment in the Notes prior to maturity, your only alternative would be to sell them. At that time, there may be an illiquid market for Notes or no market at all. Even if you were able to sell your Notes, there are many factors outside of our control that may affect their trading value. We believe that the value of your Notes will be affected by the level and volatility of the Exchange Rate, whether or not the Exchange Rate Closing Level is greater than or equal to the Initial Exchange Rate, changes in interest rates in the U.S. and Japan, the supply of and demand for the Notes and a number of other factors. Some of these factors are interrelated in complex ways; as a result, the effect of any one factor may be offset or magnified by the effect of another factor. The price, if any, at which you will be able to sell your Notes prior to maturity may be substantially less than the amount you originally invested if, at such time, the value of the Exchange Rate is less than, equal to or not sufficiently above the value of the Exchange Rate on the date you purchased the Notes. The following paragraphs describe the manner in which we expect the trading value of the Notes will be affected in the event of a change in a specific factor, assuming all other conditions remain constant.

Value of the Exchange Rate. We expect that the trading value of the Notes will depend substantially on the amount, if any, by which the Exchange Rate Closing Level at any given time is greater than the Initial Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, by the amount, if any, of depreciation in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar). If you decide to sell your Notes when the Exchange Rate Closing Level is greater than the Initial Exchange Rate, you may nonetheless receive substantially less than the amount that would be payable at maturity based on that Exchange Rate Closing Level because of expectations that the Exchange Rate Closing Level will continue to fluctuate until the Final Exchange Rate is determined. Economic, financial and other developments that affect the Exchange Rate may also affect the value of the Notes.

Volatility of the Exchange Rate. Volatility is the term used to describe the size and frequency of market fluctuations. Generally, if the volatility of the Exchange Rate decreases, the trading value of the Notes will decrease; and, if the volatility of the Exchange Rate increases, the trading value of the Notes will increase. The effect of the volatility of the Exchange Rate on the trading value of the Notes may not necessarily decrease over time during the term of the Notes.

Interest rates. We expect that the trading value of the Notes will be affected by changes in interest rates in the U.S. and Japan. In general, if U.S. interest rates increase, the value of the outstanding debt securities tends to decrease; conversely, if U.S. interest rates decrease, the value of the outstanding debt securities tends to increase. In addition, increases in U.S. interest rates relative to interest rates in Japan may decrease the future value of the U.S. dollar relative to Japanese yen, which would generally tend to decrease the value of the Notes, and decreases in U.S. interest rates, relative to interest rates in Japan may increase the future value of the U.S. dollar relative to the Japanese yen, which would generally tend to increase the value of the Notes. Interest rates may also affect the economies of the U.S. and Japan and, in turn, the exchange rates and therefore the value of the Japanese yen relative to the U.S. dollar.

Our credit ratings, financial condition and results of operations. Actual or anticipated changes in our current credit ratings (A1 by Moody's Investor Service, Inc. and A by Standard & Poor's Rating Services), as well as our financial condition or results of operations may significantly affect the trading value of the Notes. However, because the return on the Notes is dependent upon factors in addition to our ability to pay our obligations under the Notes, such as the Exchange Rate, an improvement in our credit ratings, financial condition or results of operations is not expected to have a positive effect on the trading value of the Notes.

Time remaining to maturity. A "time premium" results from expectations concerning the value of the Exchange Rate during the period prior to the maturity of the Notes. As the time remaining to the maturity of the Notes decreases, this time premium will likely decrease, potentially adversely affecting the trading value of the Notes.

Events involving the relevant currencies. General economic, political, legal and other political conditions affecting the Japanese yen and U.S. dollar, and real or anticipated changes in those conditions or results, may affect the trading value of the Notes.

Size and liquidity of the secondary market. The Notes will not be listed on any securities exchange; and there may not be a secondary market in the Notes, which may affect the price that you receive for your Notes upon any sale prior to maturity. If a secondary market does develop, there can be no assurance that there will be liquidity in the secondary market. If the secondary market for the Notes is limited, there may be a limited number of buyers for your Notes if you do not wish to hold your investment until maturity. This may affect the price you receive upon any sale of the Notes prior to maturity.

Bear Stearns has advised us that they intend, under ordinary market conditions, to indicate prices for the Notes on request. However, we cannot guarantee that bids for outstanding Notes will be made in the future; nor can we predict the price at which any such bids will be made.

We want you to understand that the effect of one of the factors specified above, such as an increase in interest rates, may offset some or all of any change in the value of the Notes attributable to another factor, such as an increase in the Exchange Rate.

You have no rights to receive Japanese yen.

Investing in the Notes will not make you a holder of Japanese yen. The Notes will be paid in U.S. dollars, and you will have no right to receive delivery of Japanese yen underlying the Exchange Rate.

State law may limit interest paid.

New York State law governs the Indenture under which the Notes will be issued. New York has certain usury laws that limit the amount of interest that can be charged and paid on loans, including debt securities such as the Notes. Under present New York law, the maximum rate of interest is 25% per annum, on a simple interest basis. This limit may not apply to debt securities in which \$2,500,000 or more has been invested.

While we believe that New York law would be given effect by a state or federal court sitting outside of New York, many other states also have laws that regulate the amount of interest that may be charged to and paid by a borrower. We will promise, for your benefit as a holder of the Notes, to the extent permitted by law, not to voluntarily claim the benefits of any laws concerning usurious rates of interest.

The Calculation Agent is our affiliate which could result in a conflict of interest.

Bear Stearns Forex Inc. will act as the Calculation Agent. The Calculation Agent will make certain determinations and judgments in connection with calculating the Final Exchange Rate, or deciding whether a Currency Disruption Event has occurred. You should refer to "Description of the Notes Discontinuance of the Exchange Rate," " Adjustments to the Exchange Rate" and " Currency Disruption Events." Because Bear Stearns Forex Inc. is our affiliate, conflicts of interest may arise in connection with our affiliate performing its role as Calculation Agent.

Bear Stearns Forex Inc. and its affiliates may, at various times, engage in transactions involving the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates for their proprietary accounts, and for other accounts under their management. These transactions, if effected in substantial size, may influence the value of such currencies, and therefore the value of the Exchange Rate. BSIL, an affiliate of Bear Stearns, will also be the counterparty to the hedge of our obligations under the Notes. You should refer to "Use of Proceeds and Hedging." Accordingly, under certain circumstances, conflicts of interest may arise between Bear Stearns Forex Inc.'s responsibilities as Calculation Agent with respect to the Notes and BSIL's obligations under our hedge.

Trading and other transactions by us or our affiliates could affect the prices of the currencies underlying the Exchange Rate, the level of the Exchange Rate, the trading value of the Notes or the amount you may receive at maturity.

We and our affiliates may from time to time buy or sell the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates or derivative instruments related to those currencies for our own accounts in connection with our normal business practices or in connection with hedging our obligations under the Notes. These trading activities may present a conflict of interest between your interest in the Notes and the interests we and our affiliates may have in our proprietary accounts, in facilitating transactions, including block trades, for our other customers and in accounts under our management. The transactions, if effected in substantial size, could affect the prices of those stocks or the level of the Exchange Rate in a manner that would be adverse to your investment in the Notes. See the section "Use of Proceeds and Hedging."

Hedging activities we or our affiliates may engage in may affect the level of the Exchange Rate and, accordingly, increase or decrease the trading value of the Notes prior to maturity and the Cash Settlement Value you would receive at maturity. To the extent that we or any of our affiliates has a hedge position in either of the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates, or derivative or synthetic instruments related to those currencies or the Exchange Rate, we or any of our affiliates may liquidate a portion of such holdings at or about the time of the maturity of the Notes. Depending on, among other things, future market conditions, the aggregate amount and the composition of such hedge positions are likely to vary over time. Profits or losses from any of those positions cannot be

ascertained until the position is closed out and any offsetting position or positions are taken into account. Although we have no reason to believe that any of those activities will have a material effect on the level of the Exchange Rate, we cannot assure you that these activities will not affect such level and the trading value of the Notes prior to maturity or the Cash Settlement Value payable at maturity.

In addition, we or any of our affiliates may purchase or otherwise acquire a long or short position in the Notes. We or any of our affiliates may hold or resell the Notes. We or any of our affiliates may also take positions in other types of appropriate financial instruments that may become available in the future.

We or any of our affiliates may also issue, underwrite or assist unaffiliated entities in the issuance or underwriting of other securities or financial instruments with returns indexed to the Exchange Rate. By introducing competing products into the marketplace in this manner, we or our affiliates could adversely affect the value of the Notes.

One or more of our affiliates have published, and may in the future publish, research reports regarding the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates. This research may be modified from time to time without notice and may express opinions or provide recommendations that are inconsistent with purchasing, holding or selling the Notes. Any of these activities may affect the trading value of the Notes.

The Cash Settlement Value you receive on the Notes may be delayed or reduced upon the occurrence of a Currency Disruption Event, or an Event of Default.

If the Calculation Agent determines that, on the Calculation Date, a Currency Disruption Event has occurred or is continuing, the determination of the value of the Exchange Rate by the Calculation Agent may be deferred. You should refer to the section "Description of the Notes Currency Disruption Events."

If the Calculation Agent determines that an Event of Default (as defined below) has occurred, a holder of the Notes will only receive an amount equal to the trading value of the Notes on the date of such Event of Default, adjusted by an amount equal to any losses, expenses and costs to us of unwinding any underlying hedging or funding arrangements, all as determined by the Calculation Agent in its sole and absolute discretion. You should refer to the section "Description of the Notes Event of Default and Acceleration."

You should decide to purchase the Notes only after carefully considering the suitability of the Notes in light of your particular financial circumstances. You should also carefully consider the tax consequences of investing in the Notes. You should refer to the section "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations" and discuss the tax implications with your own tax advisor.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NOTES

The following description of the Notes (referred to in the accompanying prospectus supplement as the "Currency Indexed Notes") supplements the description of the Notes in the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus. This is a summary and is not complete. You should read the indenture, dated as of May 31, 1991, as amended (the "Indenture"), between us and JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. (formerly, The Chase Manhattan Bank), as trustee (the "Trustee"). A copy of the Indenture is available as set forth under the section of the prospectus entitled "Where You Can Find More Information."

General

The Notes are part of a single series of debt securities under the Indenture described in the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus designated as Medium-Term Notes, Series B. The Notes are unsecured and will rank equally with all of our unsecured and unsubordinated debt, including the other debt securities issued under the Indenture. Because we are a holding company, the Notes will be effectively subordinated to the claims of creditors of our subsidiaries. At August 31, 2005:

we had outstanding (on an unconsolidated basis) approximately \$51.1 billion of debt and other obligations, including approximately \$46.8 billion of unsecured senior debt and senior obligations and \$4.2 billion of unsecured inter-company debt; and

our subsidiaries had outstanding (after elimination of inter-company items) approximately \$228.4 billion of senior debt and other senior obligations (including \$65.6 billion related to securities sold under repurchase agreements, \$75.5 billion related to payables to customers, \$32.6 billion related to financial instruments sold, but not yet purchased, and \$54.7 billion of other liabilities, including \$25.7 billion of debt).

The aggregate principal amount of the Notes will be \$[]. The Notes will mature on July [], 2007. The Notes will be issued only in fully registered form, and in minimum denominations of \$1,000; provided, however, that the minimum purchase for any purchaser domiciled in a Member State of the European Union shall be \$100,000. Initially, the Notes will be issued in the form of one or more global securities registered in the name of DTC or its nominee, as described in the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus. When we refer to Notes in this pricing supplement, we mean Notes with a principal amount of \$1,000. The Notes will not be listed on any securities exchange.

You should refer to the section "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations," for a discussion of certain federal income tax considerations to you as a holder of the Notes.

Future Issuances

Under certain limited circumstances, and at our sole discretion, we may offer further issuances of the Notes. These further issuances, if any, will be consolidated to form a single series with the Notes and will have the same CUSIP number and will trade interchangeably with the Notes immediately upon settlement. Any additional issuance will increase the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding Notes of this series, plus the aggregate principal amount of any Notes bearing the same CUSIP number that are issued pursuant to (i) any 30-day option we grant to Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc., and (ii) any future issuances of Notes bearing the same CUSIP number. The price of any additional offerings will be determined at the time of pricing of each offering, which will be a function of the prevailing market conditions and level of the Exchange Rate at the time of the relevant sale.

We will treat any additional offerings of Notes as part of the same issue as the Notes for US federal income tax purposes. Accordingly, for purposes of the Treasury regulations governing original issue discount on debt instruments, we will treat any additional offerings of Notes as having the same issue date, the same issue price and, with respect to Holders, the same adjusted issue price as the

Notes. Consequently, the "issue price" of any additional offering of Notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes will be the first price at which a substantial amount of the Notes were sold to the public (excluding sales to bond houses, brokers, or similar persons or organizations acting in the capacity of underwriters, placement agents, or wholesalers). If we offer further issuances of the Notes, we will disclose the treatment of any relevant accrued interest.

Interest

We will not make any periodic payments of interest on the Notes or any other payments on the Notes, until maturity.

Payment at Maturity

We have designed the Notes for investors who want to protect their investment by receiving at least 100% of the principal amount of their Notes at maturity, while also having an opportunity to participate in the potential decline in the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar if the Final Exchange Rate is greater than the Initial Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, if the value of the Japanese yen depreciates against the U.S. dollar). Upon maturity of the Notes, for each Note you own, you will receive a payment equal to the "Cash Settlement Value," an amount in cash per Note, in U.S. dollars, that is based upon the Final Exchange Rate in relation to the Initial Exchange Rate.

The Notes will allow you to participate in [200]% of the potential decline in the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar based upon an increase in the quoted Exchange Rate of Japanese yen per U.S. dollar. If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is greater than or equal to the Initial Exchange Rate, the Cash Settlement Value will equal the principal amount of the Notes, plus:

If, at maturity, the Final Exchange Rate is less than the Initial Exchange Rate (*i.e.*, if the value of the Japanese yen appreciates against the U.S. dollar), the Cash Settlement Value will be \$1,000. Because the Notes are principal protected if held to maturity, in no event will the Cash Settlement Value be less than \$1,000 per Note.

The "Exchange Rate" means the relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar as expressed as the number of Japanese yen which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar, as determined at the 10 a.m. (New York time) Federal Reserve Bank of New York midpoint fixing for JPY per USD exchange rate as published on Reuters Screen Page "1 FED" and on Bloomberg as TNFXJY <Index> (the "Exchange Rate").

The "Initial Exchange Rate" equals [], the Exchange Rate on January [], 2006, the date the Notes were priced for initial sale to the public.

The "Final Exchange Rate" will be determined by the Calculation Agent and will equal the Exchange Rate on July [], 2007, the "Calculation Date," or, if that day is not a Currency Business Day, the next Currency Business Day shall be the Calculation Date. If there is a Currency Disruption Event or a discontinuance of the Exchange Rate or the Calculation Agent is unable to determine the Final Exchange Rate or Successor Exchange Rate for two consecutive Currency Business Days, the Final Exchange Rate shall be determined as described in "Description of the Notes."

The "Maturity Date" of the Notes is July [], 2007.

The "Exchange Rate Closing Level" is the Exchange Rate on each Currency Business Day.

A "Currency Business Day" will be a day, as determined by the Calculation Agent in its sole discretion, other than a Saturday or Sunday, on which commercial banks are open for business (including dealings in foreign exchange and foreign currency deposits) in the principal financial centers in the U.S. and Japan.

Illustrative Examples:

The following are illustrative examples demonstrating the hypothetical Cash Settlement Value of a Note based on the assumptions outlined below. Actual returns may be different.

Assumptions:

Investor purchases \$1,000 principal amount of Notes at the initial offering price of \$1,000.

Investor does not sell the Notes and holds the Notes to maturity.

The Initial Exchange Rate is [119.00].

The Notes allow you to participate in [200]% of the amount (calculated as a percentage) by which the Initial Exchange Rate exceeds the Final Exchange Rate.

All returns are based on an 18-month term; pre-tax basis.

No Currency Disruption Events occur during the term of the Notes.

Example 1: The Initial Exchange Rate is higher than the Final Exchange Rate.

In this example, the Exchange Rate increases over the term of the Notes. The Final Exchange Rate of 140.00 is 15.00% higher than the Initial Exchange Rate of 119.00. The Cash Settlement Value will equal:

In this case, the Cash Settlement Value will equal \$1,300.

Example 2: The Initial Exchange Rate is higher than the Final Exchange Rate.

In this example, the Exchange Rate increases over the term of the Notes. The Final Exchange Rate of 125.263 is 5.00% higher than the Initial Exchange Rate of 119.00. The Cash Settlement Value will equal:

In this case, the Cash Settlement Value will equal \$1,100.

Example 3: The Initial Exchange Rate is less than the Final Exchange Rate.

In this example, the Exchange Rate decreases over the term of the Note. The Final Exchange Rate of 110.70 is 7.50% lower than the Initial Exchange Rate of 119.00. Because the Final Exchange Rate is less than the Initial Exchange Rate, the Cash Settlement Value will equal \$1,000. Because the Notes are principal protected if held to maturity, you are fully protected from any losses that may have resulted from any decrease in the Final Exchange Rate.

Summary of Examples 1 Through 3

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Initial Exchange Rate	119.00	119.00	119.00
Hypothetical Final Exchange Rate	140.00	125.263	110.70
Value of Final Exchange Rate relative to Initial Exchange Rate	Higher	Higher	Lower
Principal Protected?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Percentage Change in Final Exchange Rate	15.00%	5.00%	-7.50%
Cash Settlement Value per Note	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,000

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Table of Hypothetical Cash Settlement Values

The following table and graph reflects hypothetical Cash Settlement Values at maturity, assuming an Initial Exchange Rate of 119.00 and various hypothetical Final Exchange Rates.

Initial Exchange Rate	Hypothetical Final Exchange Rate	Percentage Change in Exchange Rate	Cash Settlement Value Per Note	Return if Held to Maturity	Initial Exchange Rate	Final Exchange Rate	Percentage Change in Exchange Rate	Cash Settlement Value Per Note	Return if Held to Maturity
119	147	19.05%	\$1,380.95	38.10%	119	118	-0.84%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	146	18.49%	\$1,369.86	36.99%	119	117	-1.68%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	145	17.93%	\$1,358.62	35.86%	119	116	-2.52%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	144	17.36%	\$1,347.22	34.72%	119	115	-3.36%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	143	16.78%	\$1,335.66	33.57%	119	114	-4.20%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	142	16.20%	\$1,323.94	32.39%	119	113	-5.04%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	141	15.60%	\$1,312.06	31.21%	119	112	-5.88%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	140	15.00%	\$1,300.00	30.00%	119	111	-6.72%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	139	14.39%	\$1,287.77	28.78%	119	110	-7.56%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	138	13.77%	\$1,275.36	27.54%	119	109	-8.40%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	137	13.14%	\$1,262.77	26.28%	119	108	-9.24%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	136	12.50%	\$1,250.00	25.00%	119	107	-10.08%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	135	11.85%	\$1,237.04	23.70%	119	106	-10.92%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	134	11.19%	\$1,223.88	22.39%	119	105	-11.76%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	133	10.53%	\$1,210.53	21.05%	119	104	-12.61%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	132	9.85%	\$1,196.97	19.70%	119	103	-13.45%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	131	9.16%	\$1,183.21	18.32%	119	102	-14.29%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	130	8.46%	\$1,169.23	16.92%	119	101	-15.13%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	129	7.75%	\$1,155.04	15.50%	119	100	-15.97%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	128	7.03%	\$1,140.63	14.06%	119	99	-16.81%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	127	6.30%	\$1,125.98	12.60%	119	98	-17.65%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	126	5.56%	\$1,111.11	11.11%	119	97	-18.49%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	125	4.80%	\$1,096.00	9.60%	119	96	-19.33%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	124	4.03%	\$1,080.65	8.06%	119	95	-20.17%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	123	3.25%	\$1,065.04	6.50%	119	94	-21.01%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	122	2.46%	\$1,049.18	4.92%	119	93	-21.85%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	121	1.65%	\$1,033.06	3.31%	119	92	-22.69%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	120	0.83%	\$1,016.67	1.67%	119	91	-23.53%	\$1,000.00	0.00%
119	119	0.00%	\$1,000.00	0.00%	119	0	-100.00%	\$1,000.00	0.00%

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Discontinuance of the Exchange Rate

If the Calculation Agent, in its sole discretion, determines, that the Japanese yen has been removed from circulation or otherwise discontinued and banks dealing in foreign exchange and foreign currency deposits in Japanese yen have commenced trading a successor or substitute currency substantially similar to the Japanese yen that the Calculation Agent determines, in its sole discretion, to be comparable to the Japanese yen (the "Successor Currency") (the number of such Successor Currency which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar on the relevant Calculation Date being referred to herein as the "Successor Exchange Rate"), then the Final Exchange Rate will be determined by reference to the Successor Exchange Rate at the time determined by the Calculation Agent on the markets for the Successor Currency on the Calculation Date.

If the Calculation Agent determines that any Successor Exchange Rate shall be utilized for purposes of calculating the Final Exchange Rate, the Calculation Agent will make such calculations and adjustments as, in the good faith judgment of the Calculation Agent, may be necessary in order to arrive at the Final Exchange Rate.

Upon any selection by the Calculation Agent of a Successor Exchange Rate, the Calculation Agent will notify us and the Trustee, who will provide notice to you. If a Successor Exchange Rate is selected by the Calculation Agent, the Successor Exchange Rate will be used as a substitute for the Exchange Rate for all purposes, including for purposes of calculating the Cash Settlement Value and determining whether a Currency Disruption Event exists.

If the Calculation Agent, in its sole discretion, determines that (i) it is unable to determine the Final Exchange Rate or Successor Exchange Rate for two consecutive Currency Business Days, or (ii) that the Japanese yen has been removed from circulation or otherwise discontinued and that no Successor Exchange Rate is available at such time, the Calculation Agent will determine, in its sole discretion, the value of the Exchange Rate to be used for the Final Exchange Rate. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Japanese yen has been removed from circulation or otherwise discontinued, and the Calculation Agent determines that no Successor Exchange Rate is available at such time and no Successor Exchange Rate is likely to become available, the Calculation Agent may, in its sole discretion, accelerate the Maturity Date for the Notes, calculate the Final Exchange Rate as specified above and calculate the Cash Settlement Value based upon such Final Exchange Rate.

Currency Disruption Events

If there is a Currency Disruption Event on the date with respect to which the Final Exchange Rate is to be determined, the Final Exchange Rate will be determined on the basis of the first succeeding Currency Business Day on which there is no Currency Disruption Event. In no event, however, will the date with respect to which the Final Exchange Rate is determined be a date that is more than two Currency Business Days following the original date that, but for the Currency Disruption Event, would have been utilized to determine the Final Exchange Rate. In that case, the second Currency Business Day will be deemed to be the Calculation Date, notwithstanding the Currency Disruption Event, and the Calculation Agent will determine the Final Exchange Rate on that second Currency Business Day in accordance with the method of calculating the Final Exchange Rate in effect prior to the Currency Disruption Event (that would have prevailed but for such suspension or limitation) as of that second Currency Business Day.

A "Currency Disruption Event" means any of the following events, as determined by the Calculation Agent, in its sole discretion:

- (a) the occurrence or existence of any condition or event (other than an event described in (b) below) which the Calculation Agent determines is material that, at any time, disrupts or impairs (as determined by the Calculation Agent in its sole discretion) the ability of market

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participants in general through legal channels to (A) convert Japanese yen or any Successor Currency into U.S. dollars, (B) deliver U.S. dollars from accounts within the local jurisdiction for Japanese yen or any Successor Currency, to accounts outside such jurisdiction, or (C) to deliver Japanese yen or any Successor Currency between accounts within the local jurisdiction to a person that is a non-resident of such jurisdiction; or

(b)

any other event, the Calculation Agent determines in its sole discretion, that materially interferes with our ability or our affiliates' ability to unwind all or a material portion of a hedge with respect to the Notes that we or our affiliates have effected or may effect.

Redemption; Defeasance

The Notes are not subject to redemption before maturity, and are not subject to the defeasance provisions described in the section "Description of Debt Securities Defeasance" in the accompanying prospectus.

Events of Default and Acceleration

If an Event of Default (as defined in the accompanying prospectus) with respect to any Notes has occurred and is continuing, then the amount payable to you, as a beneficial owner of a Note, upon any acceleration permitted by the Notes will be equal to the Cash Settlement Value as though the date of early repayment were the Maturity Date of the Notes, adjusted by an amount equal to any losses, expenses and costs to us of unwinding any underlying or related hedging or funding arrangements, all as determined by the Calculation Agent in its sole and absolute discretion. If a bankruptcy proceeding is commenced in respect of us, the claims of the holder of a Note may be limited under Title 11 of the United States Code.

Same-Day Settlement and Payment

Settlement for the Notes by Bear Stearns will be made in immediately available funds. Payments of the Cash Settlement Value will be made by us in immediately available funds, so long as the Notes are maintained in book-entry form.

Calculation Agent

Bear Stearns Forex Inc. will be the Calculation Agent for the Notes. All determinations made by Bear Stearns Forex Inc. as Calculation Agent will be at its sole discretion and will, in the absence of manifest error, be conclusive for all purposes and binding on you and us. Because we are the issuer of the Notes and our subsidiary is the Calculation Agent, potential conflicts of interest may exist between you and us, including with respect to certain determinations and judgments that Bear Stearns Forex Inc. must make in determining the Cash Settlement Value. Bear Stearns Forex Inc. is obligated to carry out its duties and functions as Calculation Agent in good faith and using its reasonable judgment.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE EXCHANGE RATE

General

We obtained all information regarding the Exchange Rate contained in this pricing supplement, from publicly available information. The consequences of a discontinuation of the Exchange Rate are described in the section "Description of the Notes Discontinuance of the Exchange Rate." We do not assume any responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of any information relating to the Exchange Rate.

The yen is the official currency of Japan, and the Exchange Rate is the relationship between the Japanese yen and the U.S. dollar. The Exchange Rate is a foreign exchange spot price that measures the relative value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar, expressed as the number of Japanese yen which can be exchanged for one U.S. dollar. The Exchange Rate is expressed as is conventional in the foreign currency market. If the value of the Japanese yen depreciates against the U.S. dollar, the Exchange Rate increases, because it takes more Japanese yen to purchase one U.S. dollar. If the value of the Japanese yen appreciates against the U.S. dollar, the Exchange Rate decreases, because it takes fewer Japanese yen to purchase one U.S. dollar.

Foreign Exchange Market

The foreign exchange market is the largest and most liquid financial market in the world. The foreign exchange market is predominantly an over-the-counter market, with no fixed location and it operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. London, New York City and Tokyo are the principal geographic centers of the world-wide foreign exchange market. Other, smaller markets include Singapore, Zurich and Frankfurt.

There are three major kinds of transactions in the traditional foreign exchange markets: spot transactions, outright forwards and foreign exchange swaps. "Spot" trades are foreign exchange transactions that settle typically within two business days with the counterparty to the trade. "Forward" trades, which are transactions that settle on a date beyond spot, and "swap" transactions, in which two parties exchange two currencies on one or more specified dates over an agreed period and exchange them again when the period ends. There also are transactions in currency options, which trade both over-the-counter and, in the U.S., on the Philadelphia Stock Exchange. Currency futures are transactions in which an institution buys or sells a standardized amount of foreign currency on an organized exchange for delivery on one of several specified dates. Currency futures are traded in a number of regulated markets, including the International Monetary Market division of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, the Singapore Exchange Derivatives Trading Limited (formerly the Singapore International Monetary Exchange) and the London International Financial Futures Exchange

Participants in the foreign exchange market have various reasons for participating. Multinational corporations and importers need foreign currency to acquire materials or goods from abroad. Banks and multinational corporations sometimes require specific wholesale funding for their commercial loan or other foreign investment portfolios. Some participants hedge open currency exposure through off-balance-sheet products.

The primary market participants in foreign exchange are banks (including government-controlled central banks), investment banks, money managers, multinational corporations and institutional investors. The most significant participants are the major international commercial banks that act both as brokers and as dealers. In their dealer role, these banks maintain long or short positions in a currency and seek to profit from changes in exchange rates. In their broker role, the banks handle buy and sell orders from commercial customers, such as multinational corporations. The banks earn commissions when acting as agent. They profit from the spread between the rates at which they buy and sell currency for customers when they act as principal.

Historical Data on the Exchange Rate

The following graph sets forth the Exchange Rate during the period from January 4, 1971 through November 21, 2005. We obtained the Exchange Rate Closing Levels in the graph below from Bloomberg and believe such information to be accurate. The Exchange Rate has experienced significant fluctuations. Any historical upward or downward trend in the Exchange Rate during any period shown in the following graph is not an indication that the Exchange Rate is more or less likely to increase or decrease at any time during the term of the Notes or as to what the value of the Notes may be. The actual performance of the Exchange Rate over the life of the Notes may bear little or no relation to the historical movements depicted below.

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The following graph sets forth the historical performance of the Exchange Rate and the hypothetical percentage returns for each 18 month period beginning with the 18 month period of May 1994 - November 1995 and ending with the 18 month period of May 2004 - November 2005. The Average Note Return and Hypothetical Note Return depicted in the graph may significantly differ from the actual return on the Notes. Note that even during the time period depicted in the following graph, during certain periods there were occasions where the Hypothetical Note Return was less than the Average Note Return. In any future period, the actual Note return may be less than the Average Note return as past performance is not necessarily indicative of future performance. Past movements of the Exchange Rate are not necessarily indicative of the future performance of the Exchange Rate. On December 9, 2005, the Exchange Rate was 120.54.

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CERTAIN U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following discussion summarizes certain U.S. federal income tax consequences of the purchase, beneficial ownership and disposition of Notes. Except as provided below under "Federal Income Tax Treatment of Non-U.S. Holders," this summary deals only with a beneficial owner of a Note that is:

an individual who is a citizen or resident of the United States for U.S. federal income tax purposes;

a corporation (or other entity that is treated as a corporation for U.S. federal tax purposes) that is created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or any State thereof (including the District of Columbia);

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

a trust if a court within the United States is able to exercise primary supervision over its administration, and one or more United States persons have the authority to control all of its substantial decisions (each, a "U.S. Holder").

An individual may, subject to certain exceptions, be deemed to be a resident of the United States for U.S. federal income tax purposes by reason of being present in the United States for at least 31 days in the calendar year and for an aggregate of at least 183 days during a three-year period ending in the current calendar year (counting for such purposes all of the days present in the current year, one-third of the days present in the immediately preceding year, and one-sixth of the days present in the second preceding year).

This discussion is based on interpretations of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), regulations issued there under, 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 U.S. Holders that purchase Notes at initial issuance and beneficially own such Notes as capital assets and not as part of a "straddle," "hedge," "synthetic security" or a "conversion transaction" for federal income tax purposes, or as part of some other integrated investment. This summary does not discuss all of the tax consequences that may be relevant to particular investors or to investors subject to special treatment under the federal income tax laws (such as banks, thrifts, or other financial institutions; insurance companies; securities dealers or brokers, or traders in securities electing mark-to-market treatment; mutual funds or real estate investment trusts; small business investment companies; S corporations; persons that hold their Notes through a partnership or other entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal tax purposes; investors whose functional currency is not the U.S. dollar; certain former citizens or residents of the United States; persons subject to the alternative minimum tax; retirement plans or other tax-exempt entities, or persons holding the Notes in tax-deferred or tax-advantaged accounts; "controlled foreign corporations" or "passive foreign investment companies" for U.S. federal income tax purposes; or investors that report any item of income, gain, expense, loss or deduction in respect of Notes for tax purposes in an amount that differs from the amount reported for book purposes by more than \$10 million), and this summary does not discuss the tax consequences under the laws of any foreign, state or local taxing jurisdictions. This summary also does not address the tax consequences to shareholders, or other equity holders in, or beneficiaries of, a holder, or any state, local or foreign tax consequences of the purchase, ownership or disposition of the Notes. Accordingly, prospective investors are urged to consult their tax advisors with respect to the federal, state and local tax consequences of investing in the Notes, as well as any consequences arising under the laws of any other taxing jurisdiction to which they may be subject.

Prospective holders of the Notes should consult their tax advisors as to the federal, state, local and other tax consequences to them of the purchase, ownership and disposition of the Notes.

Federal Income Tax Treatment of U.S. Holders

Accruals of Original Issue Discount on the Notes

We have determined that the "denomination currency" for the Notes is the U.S. dollar. Accordingly, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, we intend to treat the Notes as "contingent payment debt instruments" ("CPDIs") subject to taxation under the "noncontingent bond method," without regard to the special rules for nonfunctional currency contingent payment debt instruments. A U.S. Holder will generally be bound by our determination that the denomination currency for the Notes is the U.S. dollar, unless our determination is unreasonable and the U.S. Holder timely discloses to the IRS on its tax return for the year it purchases the Notes that the denomination currency is more properly the Japanese yen. If the denomination currency for the Notes were determined to be the Japanese yen, the Notes would be subject to special rules that apply to nonfunctional currency contingent payment debt instruments, which could affect the amount, timing and character of income, gain or loss recognized by U.S. Holders in respect of the Notes. The remainder of this discussion assumes the Notes will be subject to the "noncontingent bond method" under the contingent payment debt regulations, and will not be subject to the special rules for nonfunctional currency contingent payment debt instruments.

Under the noncontingent bond method, U.S. Holders of the Notes will accrue OID over the term of the Notes based on the Notes' "comparable yield." As a result, U.S. Holders that employ the cash method of tax accounting will be required to include OID with respect to their Notes in gross income each year even though no cash payments will be made with respect to the Notes until maturity.

In general, the comparable yield of a CPDI is equal to the yield at which its issuer would issue a fixed-rate debt instrument with terms and conditions similar to those of the CPDI, including the level of subordination, term, timing of payments, and general market conditions. If a hedge of the CPDI is available that, if integrated with the CPDI, would produce a synthetic debt instrument with a determinable yield to maturity, the comparable yield will be equal to the yield on the synthetic debt instrument. Alternatively, if such a hedge is not available, but fixed-rate debt instruments of the issuer trade at a price that reflects a spread above a benchmark rate, the comparable yield is the sum of the value of the benchmark rate on the issue date and the spread. Under the noncontingent bond method, the issuer's reasonable determination of a comparable yield is respected and binding on holders of the CPDI.

Based on these factors, we estimate that the comparable yield of the Notes would be an annual rate of approximately [4.88]%, compounded annually. Accordingly, U.S. Holders will accrue OID in respect of the Notes at a rate equal to the comparable yield. The amount of OID allocable to each annual accrual period will be the product of the "adjusted issue price" of the Notes at the beginning of each such annual accrual period and the comparable yield. The "adjusted issue price" of the Notes at the beginning of an accrual period will equal the issue price of the Notes, increased by the OID accrued in all prior periods. The amount of OID includible in income of each U.S. Holder for each taxable year will equal the sum of the "daily portions" of the total OID on the Notes allocable to each day during the taxable year in which a U.S. Holder held the Notes, regardless of the U.S. Holder's method of accounting. The daily portion of the OID is determined by allocating to each day in any accrual period a ratable portion of the OID allocable to such accrual period.

Under the noncontingent bond method, the comparable yield of a CPDI is used to construct a projected payment schedule that produces the comparable yield. Under this method, we estimate that the projected payment schedule for the Notes with a principal amount of \$1,000 consists of a projected payment on the maturity date equal to \$[74.09] in respect of each Note. Based upon the estimated comparable yield and the projected payment amount for the Notes, a U.S. Holder that pays taxes on a calendar year basis and buys a Note with a principal amount of \$1,000 and holds it to maturity will be required to pay taxes on the following amounts of ordinary income from the Note each year: \$[1.43] in

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2005, \$[48.87] in 2006 and \$[23.79] in 2007. However, for 2007, the amount of ordinary income that a U.S. Holder will be required to pay taxes on from owning a Note may be greater or less than \$[23.79], depending upon the payment at maturity. In addition, if the payment at maturity is less than \$[23.79], a U.S. Holder may have a loss for 2007. However, the actual comparable yield and the actual projected payment schedule may vary depending upon market conditions on the date the Notes are issued. U.S. Holders can obtain the actual comparable yield and projected payment schedule by contacting us at: The Bear Stearns Companies Inc. [John F. Stacconi: (212) 272-2123].

Under the noncontingent bond method, the projected payment schedule is not revised to account for changes in circumstances that occur while the Notes are outstanding.

The comparable yield and the projected payment amount for the Notes are used to determine accruals of OID for tax purposes only, and are not assurances by us or any of our affiliates with respect to the actual yield or payments on the Notes and do not represent expectations by any such person regarding a Note's yield or the index price return amount.

A U.S. Holder will generally be bound by our determination of the comparable yield and projected payment schedule for the Notes, unless the U.S. Holder determines its own projected payment schedule and comparable yield, explicitly discloses such schedule to the Internal Revenue Service (the "IRS"), and explains to the IRS the reason for preparing its own schedule. We believe that the projected payment schedule and comparable yield for the Notes as set forth above are reasonable and will therefore be respected by the IRS. Our determination, however, is not binding on the IRS, and the IRS could conclude that some other projected payment schedule or comparable yield should be used for the Notes.

Sale, Exchange, Retirement, or Other Disposition of the Notes

If the payment at the maturity of the Notes exceeds the projected payment amount of \$[74.09], a U.S. Holder will be required to include such excess in income as ordinary interest on the maturity date. Alternatively, if the payment at maturity is less than the projected payment amount, the shortfall will be treated as an offset to any OID otherwise includible in income by the U.S. Holder with respect to the Note in the current taxable year and then will be deductible as an ordinary loss, to the extent of any OID previously included in the U.S. Holder's income with respect to the Notes without regard to the two-percent miscellaneous itemized deduction rule of section 67 of the code.

When a U.S. Holder sells, exchanges or otherwise disposes of a Note, the U.S. Holder's gain (or loss) on the disposition will equal the difference between the amount received by the U.S. Holder for the Note and the U.S. Holder's adjusted tax basis in the Note. A U.S. Holder's adjusted tax basis in a Note will be equal to the U.S. Holder's original purchase price for the Note, plus any OID accrued by the U.S. Holder. Any gain realized by a U.S. Holder on a disposition will be treated as ordinary interest income. Any loss realized by a U.S. Holder on a disposition will be treated as ordinary loss to the extent of the U.S. Holder's OID inclusions with respect to the Note. Any loss realized in excess of such amount generally will be treated as a capital loss. Any capital loss recognized by a U.S. Holder will be a long-term capital loss if such U.S. Holder has held such Note for more than one year, and a short-term capital loss in other cases. An individual U.S. Holder generally will be allowed a deduction for any ordinary loss without regard to the two-percent miscellaneous itemized deduction rule of section 67 of the code. The deductibility of capital losses by U.S. Holders is subject to limitations.

Federal Income Tax Treatment of Non-U.S. Holders

As used in this discussion, the term "Non-U.S. Holder" means a beneficial owner of a note that is, for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

a nonresident alien individual,

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a foreign corporation,

an estate whose income is not subject to U.S. federal income tax on a net income basis, or

a trust if no court within the United States is able to exercise primary jurisdiction over its administration or if no United States persons have the authority to control all of its substantial decisions.

Payments on the notes to Non-U.S. Holders will not be subject to U.S. federal income or withholding tax if the following conditions are satisfied:

the Non-U.S. Holder does not actually or constructively own 10% or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of our stock entitled to vote,

the Non-U.S. Holder is not a controlled foreign corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes that is related to us through actual or constructive ownership,

the Non-U.S. Holder is not a bank receiving interest on a loan made in the ordinary course of its trade or business,

the U.S. dollar and the Japanese yen are actively traded within the meaning of section 871(h)(4)(C)(v) of the Code, and

the payments are not effectively connected with a trade or business conducted by the Non-U.S. Holder in the United States and either (a) the Non-U.S. Holder provides a correct, complete and executed IRS Form W-8BEN, Form W-8EXP or Form W-8IMY (or successor form) with all of the attachments required by the IRS, or (b) the Non-U.S. Holder holds its note through a qualified intermediary (generally a foreign financial institution or clearing organization or a non-U.S. branch or office of a U.S. financial institution or clearing organization that is a party to a withholding agreement with the IRS) which has provided to us an IRS Form W-8IMY stating that it is a qualified intermediary and has received documentation upon which it can rely to treat the payment as made to a foreign person.

We expect that Japanese yen are currently actively traded within the meaning of section 871(h)(4)(C)(v). If any of the above conditions are not satisfied, interest (including OID) on the notes will be subject to a 30% withholding tax when paid, unless an income tax treaty reduces or eliminates the tax or the interest is effectively connected with the conduct of a U.S. trade or business and the Non-U.S. Holder provides a correct, complete and executed IRS Form W-8ECI.

In general, gain realized on the sale, exchange or retirement of the notes by a Non-U.S. Holder will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax, unless:

the gain with respect to the notes is effectively connected with a trade or business conducted by the Non-U.S. Holder in the United States, or

the Non-U.S. Holder is a nonresident alien individual who holds the notes as a capital asset and is present in the United States for more than 182 days in the taxable year of the sale and certain other conditions are satisfied.

A note held by an individual who at death is a Non-U.S. Holder will not be includible in the Non-U.S. Holder's gross estate for U.S. federal estate tax purposes if payments on the notes to the Non-U.S. Holder would not have been subject to U.S. federal income or withholding tax at the time of death under the tests described above.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding

Information reporting will apply to certain payments on a note (including interest and OID) and proceeds of the sale of a note held by a U.S. Holder that is not an exempt recipient (such as a

corporation). Backup withholding may apply to payments made to a U.S. Holder if (a) the U.S. Holder has failed to provide its correct taxpayer identification number on IRS Form W-9, (b) we have been notified by the IRS of an underreporting by the U.S. Holder (underreporting generally refers to a determination by the IRS that a payee has failed to include in income on its tax return any reportable dividend and interest payments required to be shown on a tax return for a taxable year), or (c) we have been notified by the IRS that the tax identification number provided to the IRS on an information return does not match IRS records or that the number was not on the information return.

Backup withholding and nonresident alien withholding will not be required with respect to interest paid to Non-U.S. Holders, so long as we have received from the Non-U.S. Holder a correct and complete IRS Form W-8BEN, W-8ECI, W-8EXP or Form W-8IMY with all of the attachments required by the IRS. Interest paid to a Non-U.S. Holder will be reported on IRS Form 1042-S which is filed with the IRS and sent to Non-U.S. Holders.

Information reporting and backup withholding may apply to the proceeds of a sale of a note by a Non-U.S. Holder made within the United States or conducted through certain U.S. related financial intermediaries, unless we receive one of the tax forms described above.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax and may be refunded (or credited against your U.S. federal income tax liability, if any). The information reporting requirements may apply regardless of whether withholding is required. For Non-U.S. Holders, copies of the information returns reporting such interest and withholding also may be made available to the tax authorities in the country in which a Non-U.S. Holder is a resident under the provisions of an applicable income tax treaty or agreement.

The preceding discussion is only a summary of certain of the tax implications of an investment in notes. Prospective investors are urged to consult with their own tax advisors prior to investing to determine the tax implications of such investment in light of each such investor's particular circumstances.

CERTAIN ERISA CONSIDERATIONS

Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), prohibits the borrowing of money, the sale of property and certain other transactions involving the assets of plans that are qualified under the Code ("Qualified Plans") or individual retirement accounts ("IRAs") and persons who have certain specified relationships to them. Section 406 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended ("ERISA"), prohibits similar transactions involving employee benefit plans that are subject to ERISA ("ERISA Plans"). Qualified Plans, IRAs and ERISA Plans are referred to as "Plans."

Persons who have such specified relationships are referred to as "parties in interest" under ERISA and as "disqualified persons" under the Code. "Parties in interest" and "disqualified persons" encompass a wide range of persons, including any fiduciary (for example, investment manager, trustee or custodian), any person providing services (for example, a broker), the Plan sponsor, an employee organization any of whose members are covered by the Plan, and certain persons related to or affiliated with any of the foregoing.

The purchase and/or holding of the Notes by a Plan with respect to which the Company and/or Bear Stearns is a fiduciary and/or a service provider (or otherwise is a "party in interest" or "disqualified person") would constitute or result in a prohibited transaction under Section 406 of ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code, unless such Notes are acquired or held pursuant to and in accordance with an applicable statutory or administrative exemption. The Company and several of its subsidiaries, such as Bear Stearns, are each considered a "disqualified person" under the Code or "party in interest" under ERISA with respect to many Plans, although the Company is not a "disqualified person" with respect to an IRA simply because the IRA is established with Bear Stearns or because Bear Stearns provides brokerage to the IRA, and neither the Company nor Bear Stearns can be a "party in interest" to any IRA other than certain employer-sponsored IRAs as only employer-sponsored IRAs are covered by ERISA.

Applicable exemptions may include certain prohibited transaction class exemptions (for example, Prohibited Transaction Class Exemption ("PTCE") 84-14 relating to qualified professional asset managers, PTCE 96-23 relating to certain in-house asset managers, PTCE 91-38 relating to bank collective investment funds, PTCE 90-1 relating to insurance company separate accounts and PTCE 95-60 relating to insurance company general accounts. A fiduciary of a Plan purchasing the Notes, or in the case of certain IRAs, the grantor or other person directing the purchase of the Notes for the IRA, shall be deemed to represent that its purchase, holding, and disposition of the Notes will not constitute a prohibited transaction under ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code for which an exemption is not available.

A fiduciary who causes an ERISA Plan to engage in a non-exempt prohibited transaction may be subject to a penalty under ERISA. Code Section 4975 generally imposes an excise tax on disqualified persons who engage, directly or indirectly, in similar types of transactions with the assets of Plans subject to such Section.

In accordance with ERISA's general fiduciary requirement, a fiduciary with respect to any ERISA Plan who is considering the purchase of the Notes on behalf of such plan should determine whether such purchase is permitted under the governing plan document and is prudent and appropriate for the ERISA Plan in view of its overall investment policy and the composition and diversification of its portfolio. Plans established with, or for which services are provided by, the Company and/or Bear Stearns should consult with counsel prior to making any such acquisition.

Certain employee benefit plans, such as governmental plans (as defined in Section 3(32) of ERISA), and, if no election has been made under Section 410(d) of the Code, church plans (as defined in Section 3(33) of ERISA), are not subject to Section 406 of ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code.

However, such plans may be subject to the provisions of applicable federal, state or local law ("Similar Law") materially similar to the foregoing provisions of ERISA or the Code. Fiduciaries of such plans should consider applicable Similar Law when investing in the notes. Each fiduciary of such a plan will be deemed to represent that the plan's acquisition and holding of the notes will not result in a non-exempt violation of applicable Similar Law.

USE OF PROCEEDS AND HEDGING

At closing we will transfer the net proceeds from the sale of the Notes to BSIL, for its general corporate purposes. In addition, BSIL, on or before the date of this pricing supplement, will enable us to hedge our anticipated exposure in connection with the Notes by the purchase and sale of exchange-traded and over-the-counter options on, or other derivative or synthetic instruments related to, the Exchange Rate, cash or forward contract positions in the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates, futures contracts on the Exchange Rate and/or options on such futures contracts. At various times after the initial offering and before the maturity of the Notes, depending on market conditions (including the level of the Exchange Rate), in connection with hedging with respect to the Notes, we expect that BSIL will increase or decrease those initial hedging positions using dynamic hedging techniques and may take long or short positions in listed or over-the-counter options contracts on, or other derivative or synthetic instruments related to, the Exchange Rate, cash or forward contracts in the relevant currencies, futures contracts on the Exchange Rate and/or options on such future contracts. In addition, BSIL may periodically purchase or otherwise acquire a long or short position in the Notes and may, in our or its discretion, hold or resell such Notes. BSIL may also take positions in other types of appropriate financial instruments that may become available in the future. If BSIL has a long hedge position in the currencies to which the Exchange Rate relates, or options contracts in, or other derivative or synthetic instruments related to the Exchange Rate, then BSIL may liquidate a portion of its holdings at or about the time of the maturity of the Notes. Depending on, among other things, future market conditions, the total amount and the composition of such positions are likely to vary over time. BSIL will not be able to ascertain our profits or losses from any hedging position until such position is closed out and any offsetting position or positions are taken into account. Although we have no reason to believe that such hedging activity will have a material effect on the price of such options, currencies, futures contracts or options on futures contracts or on the Exchange Rate, we cannot guarantee that BSIL will not affect such prices or Exchange Rate as a result of its hedging activities. You should also refer to "Use of Proceeds" in the accompanying prospectus.

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SUPPLEMENTAL PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

Subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the Distribution Agreement dated as of June 19, 2003, as amended, the Agent Accession Agreement dated [], 2005, and the Terms Agreement, dated [], 2005, we have agreed to sell to each of the agents, as principal, and each of the agents has severally, and not jointly, agreed to purchase from us, the aggregate principal amount of Notes set forth opposite its name below.

Agents	Principal Amount of Notes
Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.	\$ []
[]	[]
Total	\$ []

The agents intend to initially offer \$[] of the Notes to the public at the offering price set forth on the cover page of this pricing supplement, and to subsequently resell the remaining face amount of the Notes at prices related to the prevailing market prices at the time of resale. In the future, the agents may repurchase and resell the Notes in market-making transactions, with resales being made at prices related to prevailing market prices at the time of resale or at negotiated prices. We will offer the Notes to Bear Stearns at a discount of []% of the price at which the Notes are offered to the public. Bear Stearns may reallocate a discount to other agents not in excess of []% of the public offering price.

In order to facilitate the offering of the Notes, we may grant the agents a 30-day option from the date of the final pricing supplement, to purchase from us up to an additional \$[] of Notes at the public offering price, less the agent's discount, to cover any over-allotments. The agents may over-allot or effect transactions which stabilize or maintain the market price of the Notes at a level higher than that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. Specifically, the agents may over-allot or otherwise create a short position in the Notes for its own account by selling more Notes than have been sold to them by us. If this option is exercised, in whole or in part, subject to certain conditions, the agents will become obligated to purchase from us and we will be obligated to sell to the agents an amount of Notes equal to the amount of the over-allotment exercised. The agents may elect to cover any such short position by purchasing Notes in the open market.

Payment of the purchase price shall be made in funds that are immediately available in New York City.

The agents may be deemed to be "underwriters" within the meaning of the Securities Act. We have agreed to indemnify the agents against or to make contributions relating to certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. We have agreed to reimburse the agents for certain expenses.

The Notes are a new issue of securities with no established secondary market. The Notes will not be listed on any securities exchange; and we do not expect a secondary market to develop. Bear Stearns has advised us that, following completion of the offering of the Notes, it intends under ordinary market conditions, to indicate prices for the Notes on request, although it is under no obligation to do so and may discontinue any market-making activities at any time without notice. Accordingly, no guarantees can be given as to whether an active secondary market for the Notes will develop or, if such a secondary market develops, as to the liquidity of such secondary market. We cannot guarantee that bids for outstanding Notes will be made in the future; nor can we predict the price at which any such bids will be made. The Notes will cease trading as of the close of business on the Maturity Date.

Bear Stearns may stabilize or maintain the price of the Notes by bidding for or purchasing Notes in the open market and may impose penalty bids, under which selling concessions allowed to syndicate members or other broker-dealers participating in the offering are reclaimed if Notes previously distributed in the offering are repurchased in connection with stabilization transactions or otherwise. The effect of these transactions may be to stabilize or maintain the market price of the Notes at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. The imposition of a penalty bid may also affect the price of the Notes to the extent that it discourages resales of Notes. No representation is made as to the magnitude or effect of any such stabilization or other transactions. Such stabilizing, if commenced, may be discontinued at any time and in any event shall be discontinued within a limited period. No other party may engage in stabilization.

Because Bear Stearns is our wholly-owned subsidiary, each distribution of the Notes will conform to the requirements set forth in Rule 2720 of the NASD Conduct Rules.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the Notes will be passed upon for us by Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP, New York, New York.

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PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT
(To Prospectus Dated February 2, 2005)

\$12,410,781,162

The Bear Stearns Companies Inc.
Medium-Term Notes, Series B

Set forth below is a summary of the terms of the notes offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. For more detail, see "Description of Notes."

- Interest

The notes have a fixed or floating interest rate. The floating interest rate formula will be based on:

- Commercial Paper Rate;
- LIBOR;
- Federal Funds Rate;
- Treasury Rate;
- Prime Rate;
- CMT Rate; or
- Another interest rate formula.

- Index Notes

The principal, interest or other amounts payable on the notes, if any, may be based on one or more indices or other formulas.

- Maturity

The notes will mature in 9 months or more.

- Ranking

The notes will be our unsecured senior debt and will rank equally with all of our other unsecured and unsubordinated debt.

- Sinking Fund

The notes will not be subject to a sinking fund unless otherwise set forth in the applicable pricing supplement.

- Interest Payment Dates

Interest on fixed rate notes will be paid semi-annually or otherwise on the dates set forth in the applicable pricing supplement. Interest on floating rate notes or index notes will be paid monthly, quarterly, semiannually, annually or as otherwise set forth in the applicable pricing supplement.

- Redemption and Repurchase

The notes may be subject to:

- redemption, at our option; and
- repayment, at your option.

- **Book-Entry Notes**

The notes will be issued in book-entry form unless otherwise set forth in the applicable pricing supplement.

- **Denominations**

The notes will be issued in minimum denominations of \$25,000 (or the specified currency equivalent), increased in multiples of \$1,000 (or the specified currency equivalent), unless otherwise set forth in the applicable pricing supplement.

INVESTMENT IN THE NOTES INVOLVES CERTAIN RISKS. SEE "RISK FACTORS" BEGINNING ON PAGE S-3 OF THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

	Per Note		Total(4)	
Initial public offering price(1)	100%		\$12,410,781,162	
Agents' discounts and commission(2)	0.125%	0.750%	\$15,513,476	93,080,859
Our proceeds, before expenses(3)	99.250%	99.875%	\$12,317,700,303	12,395,267,686

(1) We will issue the notes at 100% of their principal amount, unless otherwise set forth in the applicable pricing supplement.

(2) We will pay a commission to each agent, in the form of a discount, ranging from .125% to .750% of the price to the public of any note, depending on maturity, when that agent places such note. Any agent may agree with us, in respect of the sale of a note, to accept a commission other than one based on maturity, provided that the maximum commission will not be greater than 8%. We may sell notes to any agent as principal either at a discount or at 100% of their principal amount, for resale at negotiated prices to be determined by that agent at the time of resale. See "Supplemental Plan of Distribution." We have agreed to indemnify each agent against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

(3) Before deduction of expenses payable by us, estimated at \$700,000.

(4) In US dollars or their equivalent in one or more foreign or composite currencies.

Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.

February 2, 2005

We are offering the notes on a continuing basis through Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc., and any other agent we may designate. Each agent has agreed to use its reasonable best efforts to solicit purchases of the notes. We have reserved the right to sell notes directly on our own behalf. We will not list the notes on any securities exchange, and we cannot assure you that the notes offered by this prospectus supplement will be sold or that there will be a secondary market for them. We reserve the right to withdraw, cancel or modify the offer made by this prospectus supplement without giving notice. We may reject any offer in whole or in part.

Each agent may use this prospectus supplement in connection with offers and sales associated with market-making transactions in the notes. Each agent may act as principal or agent in the market-making transactions. The offers and sales will be made at prices that relate to prevailing prices at the time.

You must read this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus together with all the documents which are deemed to be incorporated in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus by reference (see "Where You Can Find More Information" in the accompanying prospectus). This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus must be read and construed on the basis that the incorporated documents are so incorporated and form part of this document, except as specified in this document.

We have not authorized any person to give any information or represent anything not contained in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. You must not rely on any unauthorized information.

RISK FACTORS

Your investment in the notes involves risk. In consultation with your financial and legal advisers, you should carefully consider the following risks and the other information included or incorporated by reference in the applicable pricing supplement, this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the information under "Where You Can Find More Information" on page 3 of the accompanying prospectus, before deciding that an investment in the notes is suitable for you. You should not purchase the notes unless you understand and can bear the investment risks of the notes.

There may not be any Trading Market for Your Notes; Many Factors Affect the Trading Market and Value of Your Notes.

Upon issuance, the notes will not have an established trading market. We cannot assure you a trading market for the notes will ever develop or, if one develops, that it will be maintained. If you wish to liquidate your investment in the notes prior to maturity, selling your notes may be your only option. At that time, there may be an illiquid market for the notes or no market at all. In addition to our own creditworthiness, many other factors may affect the trading market value of, and trading market for, your notes. These factors include:

the rate of interest, if any, on your notes;

the complexity and volatility of the index or formula applicable to your notes;

the method of calculating the principal, or any premium, interest or other amounts payable in respect of your notes;

the time remaining to the maturity of your notes;

the total outstanding amount of any particular issuance of notes or of our notes in total;

any redemption or repayment features of your notes;

the amount of any other securities linked to your notes; and

the level, direction and volatility of market interest rates generally.

We expect that changes in interest rates will affect the trading value of the notes. In general, if US interest rates increase, we expect that the trading value of the notes will decrease and, conversely, if US interest rates decrease, we expect that the trading value of the notes will increase.

In addition, notes that are designed for specific investment objectives or strategies often experience a more limited trading market and more price volatility. There may be a limited number of buyers when you decide to sell your notes. This may affect the price you receive for your notes or your ability to sell your notes at all. You should not purchase notes unless you understand and know you can bear all of the investment risks related to your notes.

The Notes are not Insured Against Loss by any Third Party; You can only Depend on our Earnings and Assets for Payment of Principal and Interest on the Notes.

The notes will be solely our obligations, and no other entity will have any obligation, contingent or otherwise, to make any payments in respect of the notes.

In addition, because we are a holding company whose primary assets consist of shares of stock or other equity interests in our subsidiaries, almost all of our income is derived from those subsidiaries. Our subsidiaries will have no obligation to pay any amount in respect of the notes or to make any funds available for payment of the notes. Accordingly, we will be dependent on dividends and other

distributions or loans from our subsidiaries to generate the funds necessary to meet our obligations with respect to the notes, including the payment of principal and interest. The notes will also be effectively subordinated to the claims of creditors of our subsidiaries with respect to their assets.

If funds from dividends, other distributions or loans from our subsidiaries are not adequate, we may be unable to make payments of principal or interest in respect of the notes and you could lose all or a part of your investment.

At August 31, 2004:

we had outstanding (on an unconsolidated basis) approximately \$40.0 billion of debt and other obligations, including approximately \$36.2 billion of unsecured senior debt and \$3.4 billion of unsecured inter-company debt; and

our subsidiaries had outstanding (after elimination of inter-company items) approximately \$192.6 billion of debt and other obligations (including \$55.8 billion related to securities sold under repurchase agreements, \$75.0 billion related to payables to customers, \$28.0 billion related to financial instruments sold, but not yet purchased, and \$33.8 billion of other liabilities, including \$17.4 billion of debt).

If the Notes are Redeemable, We may Redeem such Notes when Prevailing Interest Rates are Relatively Low.

If the pricing supplement for your notes provides that the notes are redeemable at our option, we may choose to redeem the notes on or after the date indicated in the pricing supplement. If the pricing supplement provides that the notes are subject to mandatory redemption or are otherwise repayable at the option of the holder, we also may be required to redeem the notes upon the occurrence of certain events or at a certain date. In the event that prevailing interest rates are relatively low when we choose or are required to redeem the notes, you may not be able to reinvest the redemption proceeds in a comparable security with a yield as high as that on the notes being redeemed. Our ability to redeem the notes before the maturity date may affect the market value of the notes at any time when potential purchasers believe we are likely to redeem notes.

If the Notes you Purchase are Floating Rate Notes, you may Receive a Lesser Amount of Interest in the Future.

Because the interest rate on floating rate notes will be indexed to an external interest rate or index that may vary from time to time, there will be significant risks not associated with a conventional fixed rate debt security. These risks include fluctuation of the applicable interest rate and the possibility that, in the future, you will receive a lesser amount of interest. We have no control over a number of matters that may affect interest rates, including economic, financial and political events that are important in determining the existence, magnitude and longevity of these risks and their results. In recent years, interest rates have been volatile, and volatility may be expected in the future. However, past experience is not necessarily indicative of what may occur in the future.

If the Floating Rate Notes you Purchase are Subject to a Maximum Interest Rate, Your Return will be Limited.

If the applicable pricing supplement specifies that your floating rate notes are subject to a maximum interest rate, the rate of interest that will accrue on the floating rate notes during any interest reset period will never exceed the specified maximum interest rate. Conversely, although the applicable rate of interest will always be greater than zero for floating rate notes, unless a minimum interest rate

is specified in the applicable pricing supplement, we cannot assure you that the interest rate you receive in the future will not decrease.

Holders of Indexed Notes are Subject to Important Risks that are not Associated with More Conventional Debt Securities.

If you invest in indexed notes, you will be subject to significant risks not associated with conventional fixed-rate or floating-rate debt securities. These risks include the possibility that the particular index or indices may be subject to fluctuations, and the possibility that an investor will receive a lower, or no, amount of principal, premium, or interest, and at different times than expected. In recent years, interest rates and indices have been volatile, and this volatility may be expected in the future. However, past experience is not necessarily indicative of what may occur in the future. We have no control over a number of matters, including economic, financial, and political events, that are important in determining the existence, magnitude, and longevity of these risks and their impact on the value of, or payments made on, the indexed notes. Some of the additional risks that you should consider in connection with an investment in indexed notes are as follows:

You may lose some or all of your principal. The principal amount of an indexed note may or may not be fully "principal protected." This means that the principal amount you will receive at maturity may be less than the original purchase price of the indexed note. It also is possible that principal will not be repaid.

Your yield may be less than the yield on a conventional debt security of comparable maturity. Any yield on your investment in an indexed note (whether or not the principal amount is indexed) may be less than the overall return you would earn if you purchased a conventional debt security at the same time and with the same maturity date.

The existence of a multiplier or leverage factor may result in the loss of your principal and interest. Some indexed notes may have interest and principal payments that increase or decrease at a rate greater than the rate of a favorable or unfavorable movement in the indexed item. This is referred to as a multiplier or leverage factor. A multiplier or leverage factor in a principal or interest index will increase the risk that no principal or interest will be paid.

Payment on the indexed note prior to maturity may result in a reduced return on your investment. The terms of an indexed note may require that the indexed note be paid prior to its scheduled maturity date. That early payment could reduce your anticipated return. In addition, you may not be able to invest the funds you receive in a new investment that yields a similar return.

The United States federal income tax consequences of the indexed notes are uncertain. No statutory, judicial, or administrative authority directly addresses the characterization of the indexed notes or securities similar to the indexed notes for United States federal income tax purposes. As a result, significant United States federal income tax consequences of an investment in the indexed notes are not certain. We are not requesting a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service (the "IRS") for any of the indexed notes and we give no assurance that the IRS will agree with the statements made in this prospectus supplement or in the pricing supplement applicable to those notes.

Your investment return may be less than a comparable direct investment in the stocks included in an index or in a fund that invests in those stocks. A direct investment in the stocks included in an index or in a fund that invests in those stocks would allow you to receive the full benefit of any appreciation in the price of the shares, as well as in any dividends paid by those shares. Indexed notes may not offer these benefits.

Hedging Activities may Affect Your Return at Maturity and the Market Value of the Notes.

Hedging activities also may affect trading in the notes. We and our affiliates may from time to time engage in hedging activities in connection with an offering of the notes. This hedging activity may affect the value of the notes in a manner that would be adverse to your investment in the notes. In addition, we or our affiliates may acquire a long or short position in the notes from time to time. In the case of indexed notes, we or our affiliates may engage in hedging activity related to the indexed notes or to a component of the index or formula applicable to the indexed notes. All or a portion of these positions may be liquidated at or about the time of the maturity date of the notes. The aggregate amount and the composition of these positions are likely to vary over time. We have no reason to believe that any of our activities will have a material effect on the notes. However, we cannot assure you that our activities or the activities of our affiliates will not affect the prices at which you may sell your notes.

Changes in Our Credit Ratings are Expected to Affect the Value of the Notes.

Our credit ratings are an assessment of our ability to pay our obligations. Consequently, actual or anticipated changes in our credit ratings, as well as our financial condition or results of operations may significantly affect the trading value of the notes. However, because the return on the notes depends upon factors in addition to our ability to pay our obligations, an improvement in our credit ratings, financial condition or results of operations will not reduce the other investment risks related to the notes.

Changes in Exchange Rates and Exchange Controls Could Result in a Substantial Loss to You.

An investment in notes that are denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars, or the principal, premium and/or any interest of which are determined by reference to a currency or currency index or indices, entails significant risks that are not associated with a similar investment in a security denominated in US dollars. Risks include, without limitation, the possibility of significant changes in rates of exchange between the US dollar and the various foreign currencies or composite currencies and the possibility of the imposition or modification of foreign exchange controls by either the United States or foreign governments. These risks generally depend on factors over which we have no control, such as economic and political events or the supply of and demand for the relevant currencies. In recent years, rates of exchange between the US dollar and certain foreign currencies have been highly volatile and such volatility may be expected in the future. Fluctuations in any particular exchange rate that have occurred in the past are not necessarily indicative, however, of fluctuations in the rate that may occur during the term of any note. Depreciation of a specified currency other than US dollars against the US dollar could result in a decrease in the effective yield of the note below its coupon rate, and in certain circumstances could result in a loss to the investor on a US dollar basis.

Governments have imposed, and may in the future impose, exchange controls that could affect exchange rates as well as the availability of a specified foreign currency for making payments with respect to a note. There can be no assurance that exchange controls will not restrict or prohibit payments in any such currency or currency unit. Even if there are no actual exchange controls, it is possible that the specified currency for any particular note would not be available to make payments when due. In that event, we will repay such note in US dollars on the basis of the most recently available exchange rate. See "Description of Notes Payment of Principal and Interest."

The Unavailability of Currencies Could Result in a Substantial Loss to You.

Currently, there are limited facilities in the United States for currency conversion between US dollars and foreign currencies. In addition, banks do not offer non-US dollar denominated checking or

savings account facilities in the United States. Accordingly, payments on notes made in a specified currency other than US dollars will be made from an account with a bank located in the country issuing the specified currency. As a result, you may have difficulty or be unable to convert such specified currencies into US dollars on a timely basis or at all. See "Description of Notes Payment of Principal and Interest." Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, notes denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars will not be sold in, or to residents of, the country issuing the specified currency in which particular notes are denominated.

Judgments in a Foreign Currency Could Result in a Substantial Loss to You.

The notes will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York. If an action based on the notes were commenced in a court in the United States, it is likely that such court would grant judgment relating to the notes only in US dollars. It is not clear, however, whether in granting such judgment, the rate of conversion into US dollars would be determined with reference to the date of default, the date judgment is rendered or some other date. New York statutory law provides, however, that a court shall render a judgment or decree in the foreign currency of the underlying obligation and that the judgment or decree shall be converted into US dollars at the exchange rate prevailing on the date of entry of the judgment. Therefore, the exchange rate on the date of the judgment could be more favorable than the exchange rate on the date that the judgment is paid.

Please note, this prospectus supplement, the attached prospectus and the applicable pricing supplement do not describe all the risks of an investment in notes denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars, or the principal of or the premium and/or any interest on which are determined by reference to a currency, currency index or indices, equity index or indices or other formula or measure. You should consult your own financial and legal advisors as to the risks entailed by an investment in notes denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars, or as to which the principal, premium and/or any interest is determined by reference to a currency, currency index or indices, equity index or indices or other formula or measure. These notes are not an appropriate investment for investors who are unsophisticated with respect to foreign currency, equity linked or indexed transactions.

Except as set forth under "Certain US Federal Income Tax Considerations," the information set forth in this prospectus supplement is directed to prospective purchasers who are US residents, and we disclaim any responsibility to advise prospective purchasers who are residents of countries other than the United States with respect to any matters that may affect the purchase, holding or receipt of payments of principal (and premium, if any) and any interest with respect to the notes. These persons should consult their own financial and legal advisors with regard to such matters.

PRICING SUPPLEMENT

The pricing supplement for each offering of notes will contain the specific information and terms for that offering. The pricing supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus supplement and the prospectus. If any information in the pricing supplement, including any changes in the method of calculating interest on any note, is inconsistent with this prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the pricing supplement. It is important that you consider all of the information in the pricing supplement, this prospectus supplement and the prospectus when making your investment decision.

DESCRIPTION OF NOTES

General

The following terms apply to each note unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement and the note. The applicable pricing supplement will describe the terms for the notes, including:

interest rate;

index or other formulas on which principal, interest or other amounts payable may be based;

remarketing provisions;

our right to redeem notes;

your right to tender notes you have purchased; and

any other provisions.

We will issue notes under an indenture, dated as of May 31, 1991, as amended, between us and JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. (formerly, The Chase Manhattan Bank), as Trustee, that is more fully described in the accompanying prospectus. The notes are part of a single series of our debt securities that are issuable under the indenture. For a description of the rights attaching to the debt securities under the indenture, see "Description of Debt Securities" in the accompanying prospectus. This description and the description under "Description of Debt Securities" in the accompanying prospectus are summaries and do not restate the indenture. We urge you to read the indenture and its supplements which we have filed with the SEC because they, and not this description or the one in the accompanying prospectus, define your rights as a holder of notes. See "Where You Can Find More Information" in the accompanying prospectus on how to locate the indenture and its supplements.

The notes are limited in amount as described on the cover page of this prospectus supplement, less an amount equal to the aggregate initial public offering price of any other securities we may issue in the future, including any other series of medium-term notes. We may increase this limit if we wish to sell additional notes in the future. Under the indenture, we may issue debt securities over the amount authorized on the date of this prospectus supplement without obtaining your consent or the consent of holders of other debt securities. Each series of notes or other debt securities may differ as to their terms. For current information on our outstanding debt, see our most recent Forms 10-K and 10-Q. See "Where You Can Find More Information" in the accompanying prospectus.

We will offer the notes on a continuous basis at various times. The notes will mature at face value nine months or more from the date they are issued and before maturity may be subject to redemption at our option or repayment at your option, as specified in the applicable pricing supplement. Each note will be denominated in either US dollars or in another currency that will be specified both on the face of the note and in the applicable pricing supplement.

You will be required to pay for any notes you purchase by delivery of the requisite amount of the specified currency to an agent, unless other arrangements have been made. Payments should be made in the specified currency in the country issuing the specified currency, provided that, at your election and, in certain circumstances, at our option, payments on notes denominated in other than US dollars may be made in US dollars. See "Risk Factors The Unavailability of Currencies Could Result in a Substantial Loss to You" and "Payment of Principal and Interest."

US dollar-denominated notes will be issued in minimum denominations of \$25,000, increased in multiples of \$1,000. Non-US dollar-denominated notes will be issued in the amount of the specified currency equal to US \$25,000 or any integral multiple of the equivalent of US \$1,000, as determined by reference to the noon buying rate in New York City for cable transfers in that specified currency as

certified for customs purposes by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York for that specified currency on the Business Day before the date of issuance or, if that exchange rate is not available, then on the basis of the most recently available exchange rate for the specified currency. We may specify other authorized denominations in the applicable pricing supplement.

We may issue the notes as currency indexed notes, the principal amount of which is payable at or before maturity and any interest on which and any premium or other amounts payable with respect to which will be determined by the difference between the currency in which the notes are denominated and another currency or composite currency or by reference to any other currency index or indices, as set forth in the applicable pricing supplement. See "Currency Indexed Notes."

We may also issue the notes as indexed notes, the principal amount of which is payable at or before maturity and any interest on which and any premium or other amounts payable with respect to which will be determined by reference to the price or performance of one or more specified securities, commodities or indices on certain specified dates, or by some other financial, economic or other measures or instruments. See "Other Indexed Notes."

The notes are unsecured and will rank equally with all of our unsecured and unsubordinated debt, including the other debt securities issued under the indenture. Because we are a holding company, the notes will be effectively subordinated to the claims of creditors of our subsidiaries with respect to their assets. At August 31, 2004:

we had outstanding (on an unconsolidated basis) approximately \$40.0 billion of debt and other obligations, including approximately \$36.2 billion of unsecured senior debt and \$3.4 billion of unsecured inter-company debt; and

our subsidiaries had outstanding (after elimination of inter-company items) approximately \$192.6 billion of debt and other obligations (including \$55.8 billion related to securities sold under repurchase agreements, \$75.0 billion related to payables to customers, \$28.0 billion related to financial instruments sold, but not yet purchased, and \$33.8 billion of other liabilities, including \$17.4 billion of debt).

The notes will not have a sinking fund unless otherwise specified in the pricing supplement.

Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable pricing supplement, each note will be issued in "book-entry" form represented by a permanent global security registered in the name of The Depository Trust Company or its nominee. As long as DTC or its nominee is the registered owner of a global security, DTC or its nominee will be considered the sole owner or holder of the book-entry note(s) represented by that global security under the indenture. See "Book-Entry Procedures and Settlement" in the accompanying prospectus.

We may issue the notes as exchangeable notes that are exchangeable at your option for:

the securities, or cash representing the value of securities, of an entity unaffiliated with us;

a basket of these securities;

an index or indices of these securities; or

any combination of the above options, as is described in the applicable pricing supplement.

Exchangeable notes may bear interest or be issued with original issue discount or at a premium, all as specified in the applicable pricing supplement. See "Exchangeable Notes."

Under the terms of the indenture, we may defease the notes. See "Description of Debt Securities Defeasance" in the accompanying prospectus.

In the following discussion, any time we refer to paying principal on the notes, we mean at maturity or upon redemption or repayment. All times are New York City time unless otherwise noted. The following terms may apply to each note as specified in the applicable pricing supplement. We have provided the definitions of certain capitalized terms used in this prospectus supplement in the Glossary.

Possible Principal Protection

The applicable pricing supplement will detail whether your principal investment in the notes is (1) fully guaranteed and thus protected, (2) possibly protected or (3) not protected.

Principal protected means that, if held to maturity, your principal investment in the notes is guaranteed and will not be at risk of loss. At maturity, you will receive at least the principal amount of the notes.

Possible principal protection means that only under certain circumstances will your principal investment in the notes be guaranteed. If, and only if, the specific circumstances in the applicable pricing supplement are met and if the notes are held to maturity, your principal investment in the notes is guaranteed and will not be at risk of loss. If the specific circumstances in the applicable pricing supplement are not met, then your investment may result in a loss as there is no guaranteed return of principal.

If your principal investment is not principal protected, then there is no fixed repayment amount of principal at maturity. Your investment may result in a loss as there is no guaranteed return of principal, and at maturity, the amount you receive may be less than the original purchase price of the notes.

Interest Rate

General

We have provided a Glossary at the end of this prospectus supplement to define certain capitalized words used in discussing the interest rate payable on the notes.

The interest rate on the notes will be either fixed or floating. The interest paid will include interest accrued from the date of original issue to, but excluding, the relevant interest payment date, maturity date, redemption date or repayment date and will be payable on each interest payment date and upon maturity, redemption or repayment. Interest will be paid to the person in whose name the note is registered at the close of business on the record date before each interest payment date, which in the case of global securities representing book-entry notes will be the depository or its nominee. However, interest payable upon maturity, redemption or repayment will be payable to the person to whom principal is payable, which in the case of global securities representing book-entry notes will be the depository or its nominee. The first interest payment on any note issued between a record date and an interest payment date will be made on the interest payment date after the next record date.

Fixed Rate Notes

The applicable pricing supplement will designate the fixed rate of interest payable on a fixed rate note. The fixed rate of interest may be zero in the case of a fixed rate note issued with original issue discount. Each fixed rate note will bear interest from its date of original issue at the rate per year stated on its face until the principal is paid or made available for payment. Interest will be paid semiannually or otherwise on the dates specified in the applicable pricing supplement and at maturity, or on redemption or optional repayment.

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The record dates for fixed rate notes will be 15 calendar days before the interest payment date, whether or not that date is a Business Day, unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement. Interest will be computed using a 360-day year of twelve 30-day months. In the event that any interest payment date, maturity date, redemption date or repayment date of a fixed rate note is not a Business Day, the related payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest will be made on the next succeeding Business Day and, unless otherwise specified by the applicable pricing supplement, no interest shall accrue for the period from and after that interest payment date, maturity date, redemption date or repayment date, as the case may be, to the next Business Day.

Floating Rate Notes

General

The interest rate on a floating rate note will be calculated by reference to the specified interest rate formula, plus or minus a spread, if any, as specified in the applicable pricing supplement. The spread is the number of basis points specified in the applicable pricing supplement as applicable to the interest rate for the floating rate note and may be a fixed amount or an amount that increases or decreases over time. The formula may be based on any of the following rates:

the Commercial Paper Rate;

LIBOR;

the Federal Funds Rate;

the Treasury Rate;

the Prime Rate;

the CMT Rate; or

another interest rate formula.

In addition to any spread, the applicable pricing supplement will also indicate any applicable maximum or minimum interest rate limitations.

The applicable pricing supplement also will define or specify the following terms, if applicable:

Calculation Date;

initial interest rate;

interest payment period;

interest payment dates;

record date;

Index Maturity;

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Interest Determination Date;

Interest Reset Period;

Interest Reset Date; and

sinking fund, if any.

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On your request, the Calculation Agent will provide you with the current interest rate and the interest rate which will become effective on the next interest reset date. See " *How Interest Is Calculated.*"

Date Interest Rate Changes

The interest rate on floating rate notes may be reset daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semiannually or annually, as provided in the applicable pricing supplement. Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable pricing supplement, the Interest Reset Date will be:

for notes which reset daily, each Business Day;

for notes (other than Treasury Rate notes) which reset weekly, the Wednesday of each week;

for Treasury Rate notes which reset weekly, the Tuesday of each week;

for notes which reset monthly, the third Wednesday of each month;

for notes which reset quarterly, the third Wednesday of March, June, September and December;

for notes which reset semiannually, the third Wednesday of the two months specified in the note and/or the applicable pricing supplement; and

for notes which reset annually, the third Wednesday of the month specified in the note and/or the applicable pricing supplement.

The initial interest rate or interest rate formula effective until the first Interest Reset Date will be indicated in the applicable pricing supplement.

After the first Interest Reset Date, the interest rate will be the rate determined on the next Interest Determination Date as explained below. Each time a new interest rate is determined it will become effective on the next Interest Reset Date. Except for notes which reset daily or weekly, no changes will be made in the interest rate during the 10 days before the date of maturity, redemption or repayment. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the interest rate for notes with daily interest reset dates may be changed until the Business Day immediately before the maturity date. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the interest rate for notes with weekly reset dates may be changed until the Interest Reset Date immediately before the maturity date. If any Interest Reset Date is not a Business Day, then the Interest Reset Date will be postponed to the next Business Day. However, in the case of a LIBOR note, if the next Business Day is in the next calendar month, the Interest Reset Date will be the preceding Business Day.

In the case of weekly reset Treasury Rate notes, if an auction of Treasury bills falls on a day that is an Interest Reset Date for Treasury Rate notes, the Interest Reset Date will be the following day that is a Business Day.

When Interest Rate Is Determined

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the "Interest Determination Date" is as follows:

for the Commercial Paper Rate and Federal Funds (Effective) Rate, the Business Day before the Interest Reset Date;

for LIBOR, the second London Banking Day before the Interest Reset Date;

for the Treasury Rate, the day of the week in which the Interest Reset Date falls on which Treasury bills would normally be auctioned. Treasury bills are usually sold at auction on Monday of each week, unless that day is a legal holiday, in which case the auction is usually held on the

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following Tuesday, unless the auction may be held on the preceding Friday. If the auction is held on the preceding Friday, that Friday will be the Interest Determination Date pertaining to the Interest Reset Date occurring in the next week;

for the Prime Rate and Federal Funds (Open) Rate, the same day as the Interest Reset Date; and

for a CMT Rate note, the tenth Business Day before the Interest Reset Date.

When Interest Is Paid

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, interest is paid as follows:

for notes which reset daily, weekly or monthly, on the third Wednesday of each month or on the third Wednesday of March, June, September and December of each year, as specified in the note or the applicable pricing supplement;

for notes which reset quarterly, on the third Wednesday of March, June, September and December of each year;

for notes which reset semiannually, on the third Wednesday of the two months of each year specified in the note or the applicable pricing supplement;

for notes which reset annually, on the third Wednesday of the month specified in the note or the applicable pricing supplement; and

at maturity, redemption or optional repayment.

If any interest payment date, maturity date, redemption date or repayment date of a floating rate note is not a Business Day, the related payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest will be postponed to the next Business Day and, unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, no additional interest shall accrue for the period from and after that interest payment date, maturity date, redemption date or repayment date, as the case may be, to the next Business Day. However, for LIBOR notes, if the next Business Day is in the next calendar month, principal, premium, if any, or interest will be paid on the preceding Business Day, provided that any such Business Day is also a London Banking Day.

For floating rate notes, the record date will be 15 calendar days before each interest payment date, whether or not that date is a Business Day, unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement.

How Interest Is Calculated

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, interest payments will be the amount of interest accrued from, and including, the prior interest payment date in respect of which interest has been paid (or from, and including, the date of original issue if no interest has been paid), to, but excluding, the interest payment date. If the interest payment date is also a day that principal is due, the interest payable will include interest accrued to, but excluding, the date of maturity, redemption or optional repayment.

Accrued interest from the date of original issue or from the last date to which interest has been paid is calculated by multiplying the face amount of the floating rate note by an accrued interest factor. The accrued interest factor is computed by adding the interest factors calculated for each day from the date of issue, or from the last date to which interest has been paid, to the date for which accrued interest is being calculated. The interest factor (expressed as a decimal calculated to seven decimal places without rounding) for each such day is computed by dividing the interest rate applicable to that day by 360, in the case of Commercial Paper Rate notes, Federal Funds Rate notes, LIBOR notes and Prime Rate notes, or by the actual number of days in the year, in the case of Treasury Rate notes. With

respect to CMT Rate notes, interest is calculated on the basis of twelve 30-day months and a 360-day year.

All percentages resulting from any calculation on floating rate notes will be rounded, if necessary, to the nearest one hundred-thousandth of a percentage point, with five one-millionths of a percentage point rounded upward (e.g., 6.876545% (or .06876545) being rounded to 6.87655% (or .0687655) and 6.876544% (or .06876544) being rounded to 6.87654% (or .0687654)), and all dollar amounts used in or resulting from such calculation will be rounded to the nearest cent (with one-half cent being rounded upward).

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the Calculation Date relating to an Interest Determination Date will be the earlier of (a) the tenth calendar day after the Interest Determination Date or, if that day is not a Business Day, the next Business Day or (b) the Business Day before the applicable interest payment date, maturity date, redemption date or repayment date. JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. (formerly, The Chase Manhattan Bank) will be the Calculation Agent with respect to the floating rate notes. On your request, the Calculation Agent will provide you with the interest rate then in effect, and, if different, the interest rate that will become effective as a result of a determination made on the most recent Interest Reset Date with respect to your floating rate note.

Legal Maximum Interest Rate

In addition to any maximum interest rate for any floating rate note, the interest rate on the floating rate notes will not be higher than the maximum rate permitted by New York law, as modified by federal law. Current New York law provides a maximum interest rate of 25% per annum. This limit does not apply to notes with principal amounts of more than \$2,500,000.

Commercial Paper Rate Notes

Each Commercial Paper Rate note will bear interest at the rate (calculated with reference to the Commercial Paper Rate and any spread) specified in the Commercial Paper Rate note and in the applicable pricing supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the Commercial Paper Rate means, with respect to any Interest Determination Date, the Money Market Yield (as set forth and calculated in the Glossary section of this prospectus supplement) on such date of the rate for commercial paper having the Index Maturity specified in the applicable pricing supplement as published in H.15(519) under the heading "Commercial Paper Nonfinancial." If the rate is not published in H.15(519) on the Calculation Date, the Money Market Yield will be calculated based on the rate on the Interest Determination Date as published in H.15 Daily Update or any other recognized electronic source used for displaying that rate under the heading "Commercial Paper Nonfinancial."

If neither of the rates described above is published on the Calculation Date, then the Commercial Paper Rate will be the Money Market Yield of the arithmetic mean of the offered rates, as of 11:00 a.m. on the Interest Determination Date, of three leading dealers of commercial paper in New York City selected by the Calculation Agent for commercial paper of the specified Index Maturity placed for an industrial issuer whose bond rating is "AA," or the equivalent, from a nationally recognized rating agency.

If the three dealers selected are not quoting as mentioned above, the Commercial Paper Rate will remain the Commercial Paper Rate then in effect on such Interest Determination Date.

LIBOR Notes

Each LIBOR note will bear interest at the rate (calculated with reference to LIBOR and any spread) specified in the LIBOR note and in the applicable pricing supplement. LIBOR will be determined by the Calculation Agent as follows, unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement:

With respect to any Interest Determination Date, either:

- (a) the arithmetic mean, as determined by the Calculation Agent, of the offered rates for deposits in US dollars for the Index Maturity specified in the applicable pricing supplement, beginning on the second London Banking Day after that date, which appear on the Reuters Screen LIBO Page as of 11:00 a.m., London time, on that date, if at least two such offered rates appear on the Reuters Screen LIBO Page; or
- (b) the offered rate for deposits in US dollars having the specified Index Maturity, beginning on the second London Banking Day after that date, which appears on the Telerate Page 3750 as of 11:00 a.m., London time, on that date.

If neither the Reuters Screen LIBO Page nor Telerate Page 3750 is specified in the applicable pricing supplement, LIBOR will be determined as if Telerate Page 3750 had been specified.

In the case where (a) above applies, if fewer than two offered rates appear on the Reuters Screen LIBO Page, or, in the case where (b) above applies, if no rate appears on the Telerate Page 3750, LIBOR will be determined based on the rates at approximately 11:00 a.m., London time, on that LIBOR Interest Determination Date at which deposits in US dollars having the specified Index Maturity are offered by four major banks in the London interbank market selected by the Calculation Agent to prime banks in the London interbank market beginning on the second London Banking Day after that date and in a principal amount of not less than US \$1,000,000 that is representative of a single transaction in such market at such time (a "representative amount").

The Calculation Agent will request the principal London office of each such bank to provide a quotation of its rate. If at least two such quotations are provided, LIBOR for that date will be the arithmetic mean of such quotations.

If fewer than two quotations are provided, LIBOR for that date will be the arithmetic mean of the rates quoted at approximately 11:00 a.m. on such date by three major banks in New York City selected by the Calculation Agent for loans in US dollars to leading European banks having the specified Index Maturity beginning on the second London Banking Day after that date and in a principal amount of not less than a representative amount.

Finally, if the three banks are not quoting as mentioned above, LIBOR will remain LIBOR then in effect on such Interest Determination Date.

Federal Funds Rate Notes

Each Federal Funds Rate note will bear interest at the rate (calculated with reference to the Federal Funds Rate and any spread) specified in the Federal Funds Rate note and in the applicable pricing supplement. The Federal Funds Rate may be either of the Federal Funds (Effective) Rate or the Federal Funds (Open) Rate.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the Federal Funds (Effective) Rate means, with respect to any Interest Determination Date, the rate on that day for Federal Funds as published in H.15(519) under the heading "Federal funds (effective)" on Telerate page 120 or any successor service or page or, if not so published on the Calculation Date relating to that Interest Determination Date, the Federal Funds (Effective) Rate will be the rate on that Interest Determination

Date that is published in H.15 Daily Update or any other recognized electronic source used for displaying that rate under the heading "Federal Funds/Effective Rate."

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the Federal Funds (Open) Rate means, with respect to any Interest Determination Date, the rate on that day for Federal Funds as reported on Telerate page 5 under the heading "Federal Funds/Open."

If (1) the applicable Federal Funds (Effective) Rate described above or (2) the Federal Funds (Open) Rate described above is not published by 3:00 p.m. on the relevant Calculation Date, then the Federal Funds (Effective) Rate and the Federal Funds (Open) Rate, as applicable, will be calculated by the Calculation Agent as the arithmetic mean of the rates for the last transaction in overnight Federal Funds arranged by three leading brokers of Federal Funds transactions in New York City selected by the Calculation Agent as of 11:00 a.m., on that Interest Determination Date.

If the brokers that are selected by the Calculation Agent are not quoting, the interest rate in effect for the applicable period will remain the interest rate then in effect on such Interest Determination Date.

Treasury Rate Notes

Each Treasury Rate note will bear interest at the rate (calculated with reference to the Treasury Rate and any spread) specified in the Treasury Rate note and in the applicable pricing supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the Treasury Rate means, with respect to any Interest Determination Date, the rate for the most recent auction of Treasury bills, direct obligations of the United States, having the Index Maturity specified in the applicable pricing supplement as published under the column designated "Invest Rate" on Telerate page 56 captioned "US Treasury 3MO T-Bill Auction Results" or Telerate page 57 captioned "US Treasury 6MO T-Bill Auction Results."

If the Treasury Rate cannot be set as described above on the Calculation Date pertaining to such Interest Determination Date, the following procedures will apply, as appropriate:

- (1) The rate will be the auction average rate (expressed as a bond equivalent on the basis of a year of 365 or 366 days, as applicable, and applied on a daily basis) as otherwise announced by the United States Department of the Treasury.
- (2) If the results of the auction of Treasury bills having the specified Index Maturity are not published in H.15(519) by 3:00 p.m. on the Calculation Date, or if no such auction is held in a particular week, then the Treasury Rate will be calculated by the Calculation Agent and will be a yield to maturity (expressed as a bond equivalent on the basis of a year of 365 or 366 days, as applicable, and applied on a daily basis) of the arithmetic mean of the secondary market bid rates as of approximately 3:30 p.m. on the Interest Determination Date, of three leading primary US government securities dealers selected by the Calculation Agent, for the issue of Treasury bills with a remaining maturity closest to the specified Index Maturity.
- (3) Finally, if the dealers are not quoting as mentioned above, the Treasury Rate will remain the Treasury Rate then in effect on such Interest Determination Date.

Prime Rate Notes

Each Prime Rate note will bear interest at the rate (calculated with reference to the Prime Rate and any spread) specified in the Prime Rate note and the applicable pricing supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, Prime Rate means, with respect to any Interest Determination Date, either the rate set forth for that date on Telerate page 5 under the heading "Bank Rate/Prime" or the rate set forth for that date in H.15(519) under the heading "Bank Prime Loan."

If the Prime Rate cannot be set as described above, the following procedures will occur:

- (1) If the applicable rate is not published in H.15(519) or on Telerate page 5 prior to 9:00 a.m. on the Calculation Date, then the Prime Rate will be the arithmetic mean of the rates of interest publicly announced by each bank that appears on the Reuters Screen NYMF Page on such Interest Determination Date as such bank's prime rate or base lending rate as in effect for such Interest Determination Date.
- (2) If fewer than four rates appear on the Reuters Screen NYMF Page, the rate will be the arithmetic mean of the prime rates quoted on the basis of the actual number of days in the year divided by 360 as of the close of business on such Interest Determination Date by at least two of the three major money center banks in New York City selected by the Calculation Agent from which quotations are requested.
- (3) If fewer than two quotations are provided, the Calculation Agent will determine the Prime Rate as the arithmetic mean on the basis of the prime rates in New York City by the appropriate number of substitute banks or trust companies organized and doing business under the laws of the United States, or any state, in each case having total equity capital of at least US \$500 million and being subject to supervision or examination by federal or state authority, selected by the Calculation Agent to quote the rate or rates.
- (4) If in any month or two consecutive months, the Prime Rate is not published in H.15(519) or on Telerate page 5 and the banks or trust companies selected are not quoting as mentioned in (3) above, the Prime Rate for the Interest Reset Period will remain the same as the Prime Rate for the immediately preceding Interest Reset Period (or, if there was no such Interest Reset Period, the rate of interest payable on the Prime Rate notes for which the Prime Rate is being determined shall be the initial interest rate).

If this failure continues over three or more consecutive months, the Prime Rate for each succeeding Interest Determination Date until the maturity or redemption of such Prime Rate notes or, if earlier, until this failure ceases, shall be LIBOR determined as if such Prime Rate notes were LIBOR notes, and the spread, if any, will be the number of basis points specified in the applicable pricing supplement as the "Alternate Rate Event Spread."

CMT Rate Notes

Each CMT Rate note will bear interest at the rate (calculated with reference to the CMT Rate and any spread) specified in the CMT Rate note and in the applicable pricing supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the CMT Rate means, with respect to any Interest Determination Date, the rate displayed on the designated CMT Telerate Page, under the caption "... Treasury Constant Maturities... Federal Reserve Board Release H.15... Mondays Approximately 3:45 p.m.," under the column for the designated CMT Index Maturity, for:

- (a) the latest rate displayed at the close of business on such Interest Determination Date if the designated CMT Telerate Page is 7051; or
- (b) the average for the week, or the month, as specified in the applicable pricing supplement, ended immediately before the week in which the related Interest Determination Date occurs if the designated CMT Telerate Page is 7052.

If the CMT Rate cannot be set as described above, the following procedures will occur:

- (1) If the applicable rate described above is not displayed on the relevant page by 3:00 p.m., New York City time on that Calculation Date, unless the calculation is made earlier and the rate is available from that source at that time on the Calculation Date, then the CMT Rate will be the Treasury constant maturity rate having the designated Index Maturity, as published in H.15(519) or another recognized electronic source for displaying the rate.

- (2) If the applicable rate described above is not published in H.15(519) or another recognized electronic source for displaying such rate by 3:00 p.m., New York City time on that Calculation Date, unless the calculation is made earlier and the rate is available from one of those sources at that time, then the CMT Rate will be the Treasury constant maturity rate, or other United States Treasury rate, for the Index Maturity and with reference to the relevant Interest Determination Date, that is published by either the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or the United States Department of the Treasury and that the Calculation Agent determines to be comparable to the rate formerly displayed on the designated CMT Telerate Page and published in H.15(519).
- (3) If the rate described in the prior paragraph cannot be determined, then the Calculation Agent will determine the CMT Rate to be a yield to maturity based on the average of the secondary market offered rates as of approximately 3:30 p.m., New York City time, on the relevant Interest Determination Date reported, according to their written records, by three leading primary United States government securities dealers in New York City. The Calculation Agent will select five such securities dealers after consulting with us, and will eliminate the highest quotation (or, in the event of equality, one of the highest) and the lowest quotation (or, in the event of equality, one of the lowest), for the most recently issued direct noncallable fixed rate obligations of the United States Treasury ("Treasury Notes") with an original maturity of approximately the designated Index Maturity and a remaining term to maturity of not less than the designated Index Maturity minus one year in a representative amount. If two Treasury Notes with an original maturity as described above have remaining terms to maturity equally close to the designated Index Maturity, the quotes for the Treasury Note with the shorter remaining term to maturity will be used.
- (4) If the Calculation Agent cannot obtain three Treasury Note quotations of the kind described in the prior paragraph, the Calculation Agent will determine the CMT Rate to be the yield to maturity based on the average of the secondary market offered rates for Treasury Notes with an original maturity longer than the designated CMT Index Maturity which have a remaining term to maturity closest to the designated CMT Index Maturity and in a representative amount, as of approximately 3:30 p.m., New York City time, on the relevant Interest Determination Date of leading primary United States government securities dealers in New York City. In selecting these offered rates, the Calculation Agent will request quotations from at least five such securities dealers and will disregard the highest quotation (or if there is equality, one of the highest) and the lowest quotation (or if there is equality, one of the lowest). If two Treasury Notes with an original maturity longer than the designated CMT Index Maturity have remaining terms to maturity that are equally close to the designated CMT Index Maturity, the Calculation Agent will obtain quotations for the Treasury Note with the shorter remaining term to maturity.
- (5) If fewer than five but more than two of the leading primary United States government securities dealers are quoting as described in the prior paragraph, then the CMT Rate for the relevant Interest Determination Date will be based on the average of the offered rates obtained, and neither the highest nor the lowest of those quotations will be eliminated.
- (6) If two or fewer leading primary United States government securities dealers selected by the Calculation Agent are quoting as described above, the CMT Rate will remain the CMT Rate then in effect on that Interest Determination Date.

Inverse Floating Rate Notes

Any floating rate note may be designated in the applicable pricing supplement as an inverse floating rate note. In such an event, unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, the interest rate on the floating rate note will be equal to a fixed rate of interest minus an interest rate

determined based on a rate specified in the applicable pricing supplement, as adjusted by any spread or multiplier.

Index Notes

Currency Indexed Notes

We may offer notes the principal amounts of which are payable at or before maturity and the amounts of interest payable on which and/or any premium payable with respect to which are determined by the rate of exchange between the specified currency and the other currency or composite currency or currencies specified as the indexed currency or by reference to some other currency index or indices, in each case as set forth in the applicable pricing supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, you will be entitled to receive a principal amount or portion of that amount in respect of the currency indexed note exceeding the amount designated as the face amount of the currency indexed note in the applicable pricing supplement if, at the stated maturity date, the rate at which the specified currency can be exchanged for the indexed currency is greater than the rate of exchange designated as the base exchange rate, which is expressed in units of the indexed currency per one unit of the specified currency, as specified in the applicable pricing supplement. You will only be entitled to receive a principal amount in respect of the currency indexed notes less than the face amount of currency indexed notes, if, at the stated maturity date, the rate at which the specified currency can be exchanged for the indexed currency is less than the base exchange rate, in each case determined as described under "Payment of Principal and Interest."

The applicable pricing supplement will set forth information as to the relative historical value of the applicable specified currency against the applicable indexed currency, any currency and/or exchange controls applicable to the specified currency or indexed currency and any additional tax consequences to holders. See "Risk Factors Changes in Exchange Rates and Exchange Controls Could Result in a Substantial Loss to You."

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, we will pay interest, and any premium, in the specified currency based on the face amount of the currency indexed notes and at the rate and times and in the manner set forth in this prospectus supplement and in the applicable pricing supplement.

Other Indexed Notes

We may issue indexed notes, in which the amount of principal, or any premium, interest, or other amounts payable at or before maturity is determined by reference, either directly or indirectly, to the price or performance of:

one or more securities;

one or more commodities;

any other financial, economic or other measures or instruments, including the occurrence or non-occurrence of any event or circumstance; and/or

indices or baskets of any of these items.

The applicable pricing supplement relating to these other indexed notes will describe one or more of the following terms of your notes:

the method by and the terms on which any amount of principal will be paid on or before maturity;

the amount of any interest, premium or other amounts we will pay you or the formula we will use to calculate these amounts;

whether your notes will be exchangeable for or payable in cash, securities of an issuer other than The Bear Stearns Companies Inc. or other property;

additional tax consequences to the holders of these notes, and

a description of certain additional risks associated with investment in these notes and other information relating to these notes.

See "Risk Factors Holders of Indexed Notes are Subject to Important Risks that are not Associated with More Conventional Debt Securities."

Original Issue Discount Notes

We may issue original issue discount notes, including zero coupon notes, which may be fixed rate, floating rate, or indexed notes that are issued at a price lower than their principal amount or lower than their minimum repayment amount at maturity. Original issue discount notes may bear no interest or may bear interest at a rate that is below market rates at the time of issuance. For notes that do not have any periodic interest payments, interest normally accrues during the life of the notes and is paid at the maturity date or upon earlier redemption or prepayment. Upon an acceleration of the maturity of an original issue discount note, the amount of interest payable will be determined in accordance with the terms of the note as described in the applicable pricing supplement. That amount is normally less than the amount payable at the maturity date. See "Certain US Federal Income Tax Considerations Original Issue Discount."

Payment of Principal and Interest

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, we will pay principal and any premium, interest or other amounts payable on all notes in the applicable specified currency. However, payments on notes denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars will be made in US dollars as described below, unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement.

At your option

Except as provided in the next paragraph, we will pay principal and premium, if any, and interest on all notes denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars in US dollars if the registered noteholder on the relevant record date or at maturity, as the case may be, has delivered a written request for payment of such note in US dollars to the Trustee at its Corporate Trust Office in New York City on or before the applicable record date or 15 days before maturity, as the case may be. The request may be made in writing (mailed or hand delivered) or by cable, telex or other form of facsimile transmission. Any request made will remain in effect with respect to further payments of principal (and premium, if any) and any interest with respect to the note payable to such holder unless the request is revoked on or before the relevant record date or 15 days before maturity, as the case may be. Please note that holders of notes denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars whose notes are registered in the name of a broker or nominee should contact that broker or nominee to determine whether and how an election to receive payments in US dollars should be made.

The US dollar amount to be paid to a holder of a note denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars who elects to receive payment in US dollars will be based on the highest bid quotation in New York City received by the Exchange Rate Agent as of 11:00 a.m. on the second Business Day before the applicable payment date from three recognized foreign exchange dealers (one of which may be the Exchange Rate Agent) for the purchase by the quoting dealer of the specified currency for US dollars for settlement on the payment date in the aggregate amount of the specified currency payable to all noteholders electing to receive US dollar payments and at which the applicable dealer commits to execute a contract. If three bid quotations are not available on the second Business Day before the date of payment, the payment will be made in the specified currency. All currency exchange costs

associated with any payment in US dollars on notes denominated in specified currencies other than US dollars will be borne by the noteholder and will be deducted from the payment to such noteholder.

Interest will be payable to the person in whose name a note is registered, which in the case of global securities will be the depository or its nominee, at the close of business on the record date before each interest payment date. However, interest payable at maturity will be payable to the person to whom principal shall be payable, which in the case of global securities will be the depository or its nominee.

The total amount of any principal (and premium, if any) and any interest due on any global security representing one or more book-entry notes on any interest payment date or at maturity will be made available to the Trustee on such date. As soon as possible thereafter, the Trustee will make such payments to the depository. The depository will allocate the payments to each book-entry note represented by a global security and make payments to the holders of such global security in accordance with its existing operating procedures. We and the Trustee will not have any responsibility or liability for the payments by the depository. So long as the depository or its nominee is the registered holder of any global security, the depository or its nominee, as the case may be, will be considered the sole holder of the book-entry note or notes represented by such global security for all purposes under the indenture. We understand, however, that under existing industry practice, the depository will authorize the persons on whose behalf it holds a global security to exercise certain rights of holders of securities. See "Book-Entry Procedures and Settlement" in the accompanying prospectus.

Payments of principal (and premium, if any) and any interest with respect to a note to be made in a specified currency other than US dollars will be made by wire transfer to an account maintained by the noteholder with a bank located in the country issuing the specified currency. Payments may also be made to the noteholder's account in another jurisdiction that we and the Trustee have approved and which has been designated by the registered noteholder on the relevant record date or at maturity, as the case may be, in writing on or before the relevant record date before the interest payment date or 15 days before maturity, as the case may be, and, in the case of payments due at maturity, the note is presented to the Paying Agent in time for the Paying Agent to pay to that account in accordance with its normal procedures. The designation shall be made by filing the appropriate information with the Trustee at its Corporate Trust Office in the Borough of Manhattan, New York City, and, unless revoked in writing, will remain in effect with respect to any future payments on the note payable to such holder.

If payment cannot be made by wire transfer because the Trustee has not received the required designation on or before the requisite date or for any other reason, a notice will be mailed to the noteholder at its registered address requesting a designation by which the wire transfer can be made and, within five Business Days of receiving this designation, the Trustee will make the appropriate payment. We will pay any administrative costs imposed by banks in connection with making payments by wire transfer, however, except as specified in the applicable pricing supplement, any taxes, assessments or governmental charges imposed on payments will be borne by the noteholder to whom payments are made.

If the official unit of any component currency is changed as a result of combination or subdivision, the number of units of that currency as a component shall be divided or multiplied in the same proportion. If two or more component currencies are consolidated into a single currency, the amounts of those currencies as components shall be replaced by an amount in such single currency equal to the sum of the amounts of the consolidated component currencies expressed in that single currency. If any component currency is divided into two or more currencies, the amount of that currency as a component shall be replaced by amounts of those two or more currencies, each of which will have a value on the date of division equal to its proportionate share of the former component currency.

Notes denominated in a specified currency other than US dollars will provide that, in the event of an official redenomination of the specified currency, our obligations shall, in all cases, be deemed

immediately following the redenomination to provide for payment of that amount of the redenominated specified currency representing the amount of such obligations immediately before the currency was redenominated.

All determinations set forth above to be made by the Calculation Agent and the Exchange Rate Agent, except as expressly provided in this prospectus supplement or the applicable pricing supplement, shall be conclusive for all purposes and binding on all noteholders and on us, in the absence of manifest error, and the Calculation Agent and the Exchange Rate Agent shall not be held liable for these determinations.

At our option in the case of an imposition of exchange controls or other circumstances beyond our control.

If the principal of (and premium, if any) or interest on any note is payable in a specified currency other than US dollars and that specified currency is not available due to the imposition of exchange controls or other circumstances beyond our control, or is no longer used by the government of the country issuing that currency or for settlement of transactions by public institutions of or within the international banking community, we may make the requisite payments in US dollars on the basis of the noon buying rate in New York City for cable transfers in that specified currency as certified for customs purposes by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York for that specified currency on the second Business Day before the applicable payment date or, if that exchange rate is not available, then on the basis of the most recently available exchange rate.

Exchangeable Notes

We may offer notes that are exchangeable at your option for securities, or cash representing the value of securities, of an entity unaffiliated with us; a basket of these securities; an index or indices of these securities or any combination of these options, all as will be described in the applicable pricing supplement. Exchangeable notes may bear interest or be issued with original issue discount or at a premium, all as will be specified in the applicable pricing supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, exchangeable notes will entitle you, either during a period or at specific times, to exchange your note for the underlying security or securities constituting the underlying basket, index or indices of these securities (or combination of these alternatives) at a specified rate of exchange. If so specified in the applicable pricing supplement, exchangeable notes will be redeemable at our option before maturity. If you do not elect to exchange your exchangeable note before maturity or any applicable date for redemption, you will receive the principal amount of such note or applicable redemption price in cash.

Upon exchange, at maturity or otherwise, of your exchangeable note, you may receive, at the specified exchange rate, either the underlying security or the securities constituting the relevant basket, index or indices or the cash value of such underlying security or securities, all as may be specified in the applicable pricing supplement. The underlying security or securities constituting any basket, index or indices may be the securities of either US or foreign entities, or both, and the exchangeable notes may provide for protection against fluctuations in the rate of exchange between the currency in which that note is denominated and the currency or currencies in which the market prices of the underlying security or securities are quoted, all as may be specified in the applicable pricing supplement. Exchangeable notes may have other terms, which will be specified in the applicable pricing supplement.

Reopened Issues

We may "reopen" certain issues at any time by offering additional notes with terms identical (other than issue date and issue price) to those of existing notes.

Extension of Maturity Date

The applicable pricing supplement will indicate whether we may extend the maturity of a note for one or more periods up to, but not beyond, the date that is set forth in the pricing supplement.

We may exercise our option to extend a note's maturity date by notifying the Trustee at least 60, but not more than 75 days, before the note's original maturity date that is in effect before we exercised our option. No later than 55 days before the original maturity date, the Trustee will mail to each noteholder a notice, first class, postage prepaid, setting forth:

- (1) our election to extend the note's maturity date;
- (2) the new maturity date;
- (3) in the case of a fixed rate note, the interest rate that will apply to the extension period or, in the case of a floating rate note, the spread, the new Interest Reset Date(s), if any, and the new interest payment date(s), if any, that will apply to the extension period; and
- (4) the provisions, if any, for redemption or repayment during the extension period.

Once the Trustee has mailed the extension notice to the noteholder, the note's maturity date shall be automatically extended and, except as may be modified by the extension notice or as described in the next paragraph, the note will have the same terms it did before the extension notice was mailed.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, no later than 20 days before a note's original maturity date, we may at our option revoke its interest rate, in the case of a fixed rate note, or the spread, in the case of a floating rate note, provided for in the extension notice and establish a higher interest rate or higher spread, as the case may be, for the extension period. We may do so by causing the Trustee to mail notice first class, postage prepaid, of a higher interest rate or higher spread, as the case may be, to the noteholder. The notice shall be irrevocable. All notes with respect to which the maturity date is extended will bear the higher interest rate or higher spread, as the case may be, for the extension period, whether or not they are tendered for repayment.

If we extend the maturity date of a note, the holder of such note may have the option to elect repayment of such note on the original maturity date at a price equal to the principal amount of the note plus any accrued interest to such date. In order for a note to be so repaid on the original maturity date, you must follow the procedures set forth under "Repayment and Repurchase" for optional repayment, except that the period for delivery of such note or notification to the Trustee shall be at least 25 but not more than 35 days before the original maturity date and except that a noteholder who has tendered a note for repayment pursuant to an extension notice may, by written notice to the Trustee, revoke any such tender for repayment until the close of business on the tenth day before the original maturity date.

Renewable Notes

We may offer notes the maturity of which may be renewed at your option for one or more specified periods up to but not beyond the final maturity of the notes. The specific terms for such extensions, including the date or dates on which the option can be exercised and whether the option can be exercised with respect to some but not all of the notes' outstanding principal balance, will be set forth in the applicable pricing supplement.

Redemption

Unless otherwise stated in the applicable pricing supplement, the notes will not have a sinking fund. Redemption dates, if any, will be fixed at the time of sale and stated in the applicable pricing supplement and on the applicable note. If no redemption date is indicated with respect to a note, the note will not be redeemable before it matures. We may redeem notes at our option beginning on a specified redemption date if the applicable pricing supplement permits redemption. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, we may redeem such notes in whole or in part in

increments of \$1,000 at a redemption price equal to 100% of the principal amount to be redeemed, together with interest payable up to the redemption date, by giving notice not more than 60 nor less than 30 days before the redemption date.

Repayment and Repurchase

Optional repayment dates will be set at the time of sale and set forth in the applicable pricing supplement and on the applicable note. Except as provided under "Extension of Maturity Date," if no optional repayment date is indicated, your note will not be repayable at your option before it matures.

If the applicable pricing supplement permits, you may cause us to repay your notes on particular dates. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, we may be required to repay your notes in whole or in part in increments of \$1,000, provided that any remaining principal amount of the note is at least \$25,000. The repayment price will be equal to 100% of the principal amount to be repaid, plus accrued interest to the repayment date.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement, for any note to be repaid in whole or in part at your option, you must deliver to the Trustee not less than 30 nor more than 60 days before the optional repayment date (or any shorter period as described under "Extension of Maturity Date"):

the note to be repaid with the form entitled "Option to Elect Repayment" set forth on the reverse of such note duly completed; or

a telegram, telex, facsimile transmission or a letter from a member of a national securities exchange or the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. or a commercial bank or a trust company in the US setting forth:
your name,

the principal amount of the note,

the certificate number of the note or a description of the note's tenor or terms,

the principal amount of the note to be repaid,

a statement that you are exercising your option to elect repayment, and

a guarantee that the note to be repaid, along with the form entitled "Option to Elect Repayment" duly completed, will be received by the Trustee no later than 5 Business Days after the date of the telegram, telex, facsimile transmission or letter.

The Trustee must receive the note and duly completed form entitled "Option to Elect Repayment" by the fifth Business Day after the date of such telegram, telex, facsimile transmission or letter. The exercise of the repayment option will be irrevocable, except as set forth under "Extension of Maturity Date."

If your note is represented by a global security, the depository's nominee will be the holder and, as a result, will be the only entity that can exercise a right to repayment. To ensure that the depository's nominee will timely exercise a right to repayment with respect to your interest in a global security, you must instruct the broker, or other direct or indirect participant through which you hold such interest, to notify the depository of your desire to exercise a right to repayment. To ascertain the time by which instructions must be given for timely notice to be delivered to the depository, you should consult the broker or other direct or indirect participant through which you hold your interest in a note.

The applicable pricing supplement may provide that the maturity of a floating rate note will be automatically extended for a specified period, unless you elect during a designated period to terminate the automatic extension of the maturity by following the procedures described in the applicable pricing supplement and in the floating rate note.

At any time, we may buy the notes at any price in the open market or otherwise. Any notes we purchase may be held or resold or, at our discretion, may be surrendered to the Trustee for cancellation.

CERTAIN US FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following discussion summarizes certain US federal income tax consequences of the purchase, beneficial ownership and disposition of notes. Except as provided below under "Federal Income Tax Consequences to Non-US Holders," this summary deals only with a beneficial owner of a note that is:

an individual who is a citizen or resident of the United States for US federal income tax purposes;

a corporation (or other entity that is treated as a corporation for US federal tax purposes) that is created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or any state thereof (including the District of Columbia);

an estate whose income is subject to US federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

a trust if a court within the United States is able to exercise primary supervision over its administration, and one or more United States persons have the authority to control all of its substantial decisions (each, a "US Holder").

If a partnership (or other entity that is treated as a partnership for US federal tax purposes) is a beneficial owner of notes, the treatment of a partner in the partnership will generally depend upon the status of the partner and upon the activities of the partnership. A beneficial owner of notes that is a partnership, and partners in such a partnership, should consult their tax advisors about the US federal income tax consequences of holding and disposing of the notes.

An individual may, subject to certain exceptions, be deemed to be a resident of the United States for US federal income tax purposes by reason of being present in the United States for at least 31 days in the calendar year and for an aggregate of at least 183 days during a three-year period ending in the current calendar year (counting for such purposes all of the days present in the current year, one-third of the days present in the immediately preceding year, and one-sixth of the days present in the second preceding year).

This discussion is based on interpretations of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (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 US Holders that purchase notes at initial issuance and beneficially own such notes as capital assets and not as part of a "straddle," "hedge," "synthetic security" or a "conversion transaction" for federal income tax purposes, or as part of some other integrated investment. This summary does not discuss all of the tax consequences that may be relevant to particular investors or to investors subject to special treatment under the federal income tax laws (such as S corporations, banks, thrifts, other financial institutions, insurance companies, mutual funds, small business investment companies, tax-exempt organizations, retirement plans, real estate investment trusts, regulated investment companies, securities dealers or brokers, traders in securities electing mark to market treatment, investors whose functional currency is not the US dollar, persons subject to the alternative minimum tax, and former citizens or residents of the United States), and this summary does not discuss the tax consequences under the laws of any foreign, state or local taxing jurisdictions. Accordingly, prospective investors are urged to consult their tax advisors with respect to the federal, state and local tax consequences of investing in the notes, as well as any consequences arising under the laws of any other taxing jurisdiction to which they may be subject.

The applicable pricing supplement may contain a further discussion of the special US federal income tax consequences applicable to certain notes, including notes that may be convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for our common or preferred stock or depositary shares or for securities, or cash representing the value of securities, of an entity unaffiliated with us, a basket of securities, or

an index or indices of these securities, notes that are "contingent payment debt instruments" (as described below), notes that are renewable or extendible, currency or other indexed notes, and amortizing notes.

Payments of Interest

Except as described below, interest on a note will be taxable to a US Holder as ordinary interest income at the time it accrues or is received in accordance with the US Holder's normal method of accounting for tax purposes. Special rules governing the treatment of notes issued at an original issue discount are described under "Original Issue Discount," below.

Original Issue Discount

The following is a summary of the principal US federal income tax consequences of the ownership of notes having original issue discount ("OID") and a term of more than one year. The US federal income tax treatment of the notes with a term of one year or less is summarized below under "Short-Term Notes."

A note will have OID for US federal income tax purposes if its "issue price" is less than its "stated redemption price at maturity" by more than a *de minimis* amount, as discussed below.

The issue price of a note generally is the first price at which a substantial amount of the "issue" of the notes is sold to the public for money (excluding sales to bond houses, brokers or similar persons or organizations acting in the capacity of underwriters, placement agents or wholesalers), excluding pre-issuance accrued discount (as discussed below under "Pre-Issuance Accrued Interest").

The stated redemption price at maturity of a note generally is the total amount of all payments provided by the note other than "qualified stated interest" payments.

Qualified stated interest generally is stated interest that is "unconditionally payable" in cash or property (other than debt instruments of the issuer) at least annually either at a single fixed rate, or a "qualifying variable rate" (as described below). Qualified stated interest is taxable to a US Holder when accrued or received in accordance with the US Holder's normal method of tax accounting.

Interest is considered unconditionally payable only if reasonable legal remedies exist to compel timely payment or the note otherwise provides terms and conditions that make the likelihood of late payment (other than a late payment within a reasonable grace period) or non-payment a remote contingency. Interest is payable at a single fixed rate only if the rate appropriately takes into account the length of the interval between stated interest payments. Thus, if the interval between payments varies during the term of the instrument, the value of the fixed rate on which payment is based generally must be adjusted to reflect a compounding assumption consistent with the length of the interval preceding the payment.

Notes having "*de minimis* OID" generally will be treated as not having OID unless a US Holder elects to treat all interest on the note as OID. See "Election to Treat All Interest as Original Issue Discount (Constant Yield Method Election)." A note will be considered to have *de minimis* OID if the difference between its stated redemption price at maturity and its issue price is less than the product of $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent of the stated redemption price at maturity and the number of complete years from the issue date to maturity (or the weighted average maturity in the case of a note that provides for payment of an amount other than qualified stated interest before maturity).

US Holders of notes having OID will be required to include OID in gross income for US federal income tax purposes as it accrues (regardless of the US Holder's method of accounting), which may be in advance of receipt of the cash attributable to such income. OID accrues under the constant yield method, based on a compounded yield to maturity, as described below. Accordingly, US Holders of

notes having OID will generally be required to include in income increasingly greater amounts of OID in successive accrual periods.

The annual amount of OID includible in income by the initial US Holder of a note having OID will equal the sum of the "daily portions" of the OID with respect to the note for each day on which the US Holder held the note during the taxable year. Generally, the daily portions of OID are determined by allocating to each day in an "accrual period" the ratable portion of OID allocable to the accrual period. The term accrual period means an interval of time with respect to which the accrual of OID is measured, and which may vary in length over the term of the note provided that each accrual period is no longer than one year and each scheduled payment of principal or interest occurs on either the first or last day of an accrual period.

The amount of OID allocable to an accrual period will be the excess of:

the product of the "adjusted issue price" of the note at the commencement of the accrual period and its "yield to maturity" over

the amount of any qualified stated interest payments allocable to the accrual period.

The adjusted issue price of a note at the beginning of the first accrual period is its issue price and, on any day thereafter, it is the sum of the issue price and the amount of OID previously includible in the gross income of the US Holder (without regard to any "acquisition premium" as described below), reduced by the amount of any payment other than a payment of qualified stated interest previously made on the note. If an interval between payments of qualified stated interest contains more than one accrual period, the amount of qualified stated interest that is payable at the end of the interval (including any qualified stated interest that is payable on the first day of the accrual period immediately following the interval) is allocated on a *pro-rata* basis to each accrual period in the interval, and the adjusted issue price at the beginning of each accrual period in the interval is increased by the amount of any qualified stated interest that has accrued prior to the first day of the accrual period but is not payable until the end of the interval. The yield to maturity of a note is the yield to maturity computed on the basis of compounding at the end of each accrual period properly adjusted for the length of the particular accrual period. If all accrual periods are of equal length except for a shorter initial and/or final accrual period(s), the amount of OID allocable to the initial period may be computed using any reasonable method; however, the OID allocable to the final accrual period will always be the difference between the amount payable at maturity (other than a payment of qualified stated interest) and the adjusted issue price at the beginning of the final accrual period.

Pre-Issuance Accrued Interest

If (i) a portion of the initial purchase price of a note is attributable to pre-issuance accrued interest, (ii) the first stated interest payment on the note is to be made within one year of the note's issue date, and (iii) the payment will equal or exceed the amount of pre-issuance accrued interest, then the US Holder may compute the issue price of the note by subtracting the amount of the pre-issuance accrued interest. In that event, a portion of the first stated interest payment will be treated as a return of the excluded pre-issuance accrued interest and not as an amount payable on the note.

Alternative Payment Schedules

If a note (i) provides for an alternative payment schedule or schedules applicable upon the occurrence of a contingency or contingencies relating to payments of interest or of principal (other than a "remote" or "incidental" contingency), (ii) the timing and amount of the payments that comprise each payment schedule are known as of the issue date and (iii) one of such schedules is significantly more likely than not to occur, then the yield and maturity of the note are generally determined by assuming that the payments will be made according to that payment schedule. If there is no single payment

schedule that is significantly more likely than not to occur (other than because of a mandatory sinking fund), the note may be subject to the rules described below under "Contingent Payment Debt Instruments" and in the applicable pricing supplement.

If a note provides for alternative payment schedules, the determination of whether the note provides for qualified stated interest is made by analyzing each alternative payment schedule as if each schedule were the note's sole payment schedule. The note will provide for qualified stated interest to the extent of the lowest fixed rate at which qualified stated interest would be payable under any of the alternative payment schedules.

Call and Put Options

For purposes of calculating the yield and maturity of a note subject to a call option held by us, in general, the option is presumed exercised if the yield on the note would be less than it would be if the option were not exercised, and a put option held by a US Holder is presumed exercised if the yield on the note would be more, than it would be if the option were not exercised. The effect of this rule generally may accelerate or defer the inclusion of OID in the income of a US Holder whose note is subject to a put option or a call option, as compared to a note that does not have such an option. If any option that is presumed to be exercised is not in fact exercised, the note is treated as reissued solely for purposes of the OID rules on the date of presumed exercise for an amount equal to its adjusted issue price on that date. The deemed reissuance will have the effect of redetermining the note's yield and maturity for OID purposes and any related subsequent accruals of OID.

Variable Rate Debt Instruments

A note that qualifies as a "variable rate debt instrument" will be subject to the rules described below and will not be treated as a "contingent payment debt instrument" described in the following section. A note will be treated as a variable rate debt instrument if:

the issue price of the note does not exceed the total amount of noncontingent principal payments by more than the product of such principal payments and the lesser of (i) 15 percent or (ii) the product of 1.5 percent and the number of complete years in the debt instrument's term (or its weighted average maturity in the case of an installment obligation), and

the note does not provide for any stated interest other than stated interest paid or compounded at least annually at a qualifying variable rate which is (i) one or more "qualified floating rates," (ii) a single fixed rate and one or more qualified floating rates, (iii) a "single objective rate," or (iv) a single fixed rate and a single objective rate that is a "qualified inverse floating rate."

For purposes of determining if a note is a variable rate debt instrument, a qualified floating rate is a variable rate whose variations can reasonably be expected to measure contemporaneous variations in the cost of newly borrowed funds in the currency in which the debt instrument is denominated and is set at a "current rate." A qualified floating rate (or objective rate, as described below) must be set at a current value of that rate. A current value is the value of the variable rate on any day that is no earlier than three months prior to the first day on which that value is in effect and no later than one year following that day.

A multiple of a qualified floating rate is generally not a qualified floating rate, unless it is either:

a product of a qualified rate times a fixed multiple greater than 0.65 but not more than 1.35, or

a multiple greater than 0.65 but not more than 1.35, increased or decreased by a fixed rate.

Certain combinations of rates are treated as a single qualified floating rate, including (i) interest stated at a fixed rate for an initial period of one year or less followed by a qualified floating rate if the value

of the floating rate at the issue date is intended to approximate the fixed rate, and (ii) two or more qualified floating rates that can reasonably be expected to have approximately the same values throughout the term of the note. A combination of these rates is generally treated as a single qualified floating rate if the values of all rates on the issue date are within 0.25 percentage points of each other. A variable rate that is subject to an interest rate cap, floor, governor or similar restriction on rate adjustment is treated as a qualified floating rate only if the restriction is fixed throughout the term of the note, or is not reasonably expected as of the issue date to cause the yield on the note to differ significantly from its expected yield absent the restriction.

An objective rate is defined as a rate (other than a qualified floating rate) that is determined using a single fixed formula and that is based on objective financial or economic information (other than a rate based on information that is within our control (or the control of a party that is related to us) or that is unique to our circumstances (or those of a related party)). The IRS may designate other variable rates that will be treated as objective rates. However, a variable rate is not an objective rate if it is reasonably expected that the average value of the rate during the first half of the note's term will differ significantly from the average value of such rate during the final half of its term. A combination of a fixed rate of stated interest for an initial period of one year or less followed by an objective rate is treated as a single objective rate if the value of the objective rate at the issue date is intended to approximate the fixed rate; such a combination of rates is generally treated as a single objective rate if the objective rate on the issue date does not differ from the fixed rate by more than 0.25 percentage points. An objective rate is a qualified inverse floating rate if it is equal to a fixed rate reduced by a qualified floating rate, the variations in which can reasonably be expected to inversely reflect contemporaneous variations in the qualified floating rate (disregarding permissible rate caps, floors, governors and similar restrictions as those discussed above).

If a note is a variable rate debt instrument, special rules apply to determine the amount of qualified stated interest and the amount and accrual of any OID. If the note bears interest that is unconditionally payable at least annually at a single qualified floating rate or objective rate, all stated interest is treated as qualified stated interest. The accrual of any OID is determined by assuming the note bears interest at a fixed interest rate equal to the issue date value of the qualified floating rate or qualified inverse floating rate or, in the case of any other objective rate, a fixed internal rate that is equal to the reasonably expected yield for the note. The qualified stated interest allocable to an accrual period is increased (or decreased) if the interest actually paid during an accrual period exceeds (or is less than) the interest assumed to be paid during the accrual period.

If the note bears interest at a qualifying variable rate other than a single qualified floating rate or objective rate, the amount and accrual of OID generally are determined by (i) determining a fixed rate substitute for each variable rate as described in the preceding paragraph, (ii) determining the amount of qualified stated interest and OID by assuming the note bears interest at such substitute fixed rates and (iii) making appropriate adjustments to the qualified stated interest and OID so determined for actual interest rates under the note. However, if such qualifying variable rate includes a fixed rate, the note is treated for purposes of applying clause (i) of the preceding sentence as if it provided for an assumed qualified floating rate (or qualified inverse floating rate if the actual variable rate is such) that would cause the note to have approximately the same fair market value, and the rate is used in lieu of the fixed rate.

Notes bearing interest at a variable rate and having a term in excess of one year that do not bear interest at a qualifying variable rate or that have contingent principal payments or an issue price that exceeds the noncontingent principal payments by more than the allowable amount are treated as "contingent payment debt instruments," as described below.

Contingent Payment Debt Instruments

Notes that provide for one or more contingent payments but that do not qualify as variable rate debt instruments may be treated as contingent payment debt instruments ("CPDIs"). If a CPDI is issued for cash or publicly traded property, OID is determined and accrued under the "noncontingent bond method."

Under the noncontingent bond method, US Holders of the notes will accrue OID over the term of the note based on the note's "comparable yield." In general the comparable yield of a CPDI is equal to the yield at which the issuer would issue a fixed rate debt instrument with terms and conditions similar to those of the CPDI, including level of subordination, term, timing of payments, and general market conditions. However, if a fixed rate debt instrument with similar terms and conditions is not available, but a similar fixed rate debt instrument of an issuer is traded at a price that reflects a spread above a benchmark rate, the comparable yield is the sum of the benchmark rate on the issue date and the spread.

In addition to the determination of a comparable yield, the noncontingent bond method requires determination of a schedule of the projected amount of each payment (whether or not contingent) to be made under the CPDI. The projected payment schedule is determined in such a way that the sum of the discounted present value of the projected amounts of all payments, determined using a discount rate equal to the comparable yield, equals the issue price and reasonably reflects the relative expected values of the payments. The projected payment schedule is then determined as of the issue date and remains fixed throughout the term of the CPDI.

The projected payment schedule is used to determine the US Holder's interest accruals and adjustments, unless the US Holder determines that our projected payment schedule is unreasonable, in which case the US Holder must disclose its own projected payment schedule in connection with its federal income tax return and the reason(s) why it is not using our projected payment schedule.

The projected payment schedule includes all noncontingent payments as well as a projected amount for each contingent payment. Appropriate adjustments are made to account for any difference between the projected amount of a contingent payment and the actual amount of the payment. The projected amounts are, in effect, treated as fixed, and interest accrual is required based on these projected amounts whether or not the amount of any payment is fixed or determinable in the taxable year. Thus, the noncontingent bond method may result in recognition of income prior to the receipt of cash.

A US Holder's basis in a CPDI is increased by the projected contingent payments accrued by the holder under the projected payment schedule (as determined without regard to adjustments made to reflect differences between actual and projected payments) and reduced by the amount of any non-contingent payments and the projected amount of any contingent payments previously made. Gain on the sale, exchange, or retirement of a CPDI generally would be treated as ordinary income. Losses, on the other hand, would be treated as ordinary only to the extent of the holder's prior net interest inclusions (reduced by the total net negative adjustments previously allowed to the holder as an ordinary loss) and capital to the extent in excess thereof.

The pricing supplement applicable to any note that is treated as a CPDI will describe the material US federal income tax consequences of the ownership of the note. Prospective investors should consult their own tax advisors with respect to the application of the CPDI provisions to notes.

Short-Term Notes

A note that has a maturity of one year or less from the date of its issuance is a "short-term note." In general, an individual or other cash method US Holder of a short-term note is not required to accrue OID for US federal income tax purposes unless the US Holder elects to do so. This election

applies to all short-term notes acquired by the US Holder during the first taxable year for which the election is made, and all subsequent taxable years of the US Holder, unless the IRS consents to a revocation. US Holders that report income for US federal income tax purposes on the accrual method and certain other holders, including banks, common trust funds, holders who hold the short-term notes as part of certain identified hedging transactions, regulated investment companies, certain pass-through entities and dealers in securities, are required to include OID on such short-term notes on a straight-line basis, unless an irrevocable election with respect to any short-term note is made to accrue the OID under the constant yield method based on daily compounding. In the case of a US Holder that is not required and does not elect to include OID in income currently, any gain realized on the sale, exchange or retirement of a short-term note is treated as ordinary income to the extent of the OID which had accrued on a straight-line basis (or, if elected, under the constant yield method based on daily compounding) through the date of sale, exchange or retirement. In addition, non-electing US Holders that are not subject to the current inclusion requirement described in this paragraph will be required to defer deductions for any interest paid on indebtedness incurred or continued to purchase or carry such short-term notes in an amount not exceeding the deferred interest income, until the deferred interest income is realized.

For purposes of determining the amount of OID subject to these rules, all interest payments on a short-term note, including stated interest, are included in the short-term note's stated redemption price at maturity.

Market Discount and Premium

If a US Holder purchases a note, other than a short-term note, for an amount that is less than its stated redemption price at maturity or, in the case of a note having OID, less than its revised issue price (which is the sum of the issue price of the note and the aggregate amount of the OID previously includible in the gross income of any holder (without regard to any acquisition premium)), the amount of the difference generally will be treated as market discount for US federal income tax purposes. (It is possible that a US Holder may purchase a note at original issuance for an amount that is different than its issue price.) The amount of any market discount generally will be treated as *de minimis* and disregarded if it is less than the product of 0.25 percent of the stated redemption price at maturity of the note and the number of complete years to maturity (or weighted average maturity in the case of notes paying any amount other than qualified stated interest prior to maturity).

Under the market discount rules, a US Holder is required to treat any principal payment on, or any gain on the sale, exchange, retirement or other disposition of, a note as ordinary income to the extent of any accrued market discount which has not previously been included in income. If the note is disposed of in a nontaxable transaction (other than certain specified nonrecognition transactions), accrued market discount will be includible as ordinary income to the US Holder as if the US Holder had sold the note at its then fair market value. In addition, the US Holder may be required to defer, until the maturity of the note or its earlier disposition in a taxable transaction, the deduction of all or a portion of the interest expense on any indebtedness incurred or continued to purchase or carry the note.

Market discount accrues ratably during the period from the date of acquisition to the maturity of a note, unless the US Holder elects to accrue it under the constant yield method. A US Holder of a note may elect to include market discount in income currently as it accrues (either ratably or under the constant yield method), in which case the rule described above regarding deferral of interest deductions will not apply. The election to include market discount currently applies to all market discount obligations acquired during or after the first taxable year to which the election applies, and may not be revoked without the consent of the IRS. If an election is made to include market discount in income currently, the basis of the note in the hands of the US Holder will be increased by the market discount thereon as it is included in income.

A US Holder that purchases a note having OID for an amount exceeding its "adjusted issue price" (which is described above under " Original Issue Discount") and less than or equal to the sum of all remaining amounts payable on the note other than payments of qualified stated interest will be treated as having purchased the note with acquisition premium. The amount of OID that the US Holder must include in gross income with respect to such note will be reduced in the proportion that the excess bears to the OID remaining to be accrued from the date of the note's acquisition through the stated maturity date. Rather than apply the above fraction, a US Holder that, as discussed below, elects to treat all interest as OID would treat the purchase at an acquisition premium as a purchase at an original issuance and calculate OID accruals on a constant yield to maturity.

A US Holder that acquires a note for an amount that is greater than the sum of all remaining amounts payable on the note other than payments of qualified stated interest will be treated as having purchased the note at a bond premium, and will not be required to include any OID in income. A US Holder generally may elect to amortize bond premium. The election to amortize bond premium must be made with a timely-filed federal income tax return for the first taxable year to which the US Holder wishes the election to apply.

If bond premium is amortized, the amount of interest that must be included in the US Holder's income for each period ending on an interest payment date or on stated maturity, as the case may be, will be reduced by the portion of bond premium allocable to such period based on the note's yield to maturity (or, in certain circumstances, based on an earlier call date) determined by using the US Holder's basis of the note, compounding at the close of each accrual period. If the bond premium allocable to an accrual period is in excess of qualified stated interest allocable to that period, the excess may be deducted to the extent of prior income inclusions and is then carried to the next accrual period and offsets qualified stated interest in such period. There are also special rules for determining bond premium on variable rate debt instruments and on debt instruments with alternative payment schedules that are not treated as CPDIs. If an election to amortize bond premium is not made, a US Holder must include the full amount of each interest payment in income in accordance with its regular method of accounting and will receive a tax benefit from the premium only in computing its gain or loss upon the sale or other disposition or payment of the principal amount of the note.

An election to amortize bond premium will apply to amortizable bond premium on all notes and other bonds, the interest on which is includible in the US Holder's gross income, held at the beginning of the US Holder's first taxable year to which the election applies or thereafter acquired, and may be revoked only with the consent of the IRS. The election to treat all interest as OID is treated as an election to amortize bond premium. Special rules may apply if a note is subject to a call option prior to maturity at a price in excess of its stated redemption price at maturity.

Election to Treat All Interest as Original Issue Discount (Constant Yield Method Election)

A US Holder of a note may elect to include in income all interest and discount (including *de minimis* OID and *de minimis* market discount), as adjusted by any premium with respect to the note, as OID on a constant yield method, which is described above under " Original Issue Discount." The election is made for the taxable year in which the US Holder acquired the note, and it may not be revoked without the consent of the IRS. If the election is made with respect to a note having market discount, the US Holder will be deemed to have elected currently to include market discount on a constant yield basis with respect to all debt instruments having market discount acquired during the year of election or thereafter. If the election is made with respect to a note having amortizable bond premium, the US Holder will be deemed to have made an election to amortize premium generally with respect to all debt instruments having amortizable bond premium held by the US Holder during the year of election or thereafter.

Foreign Currency Notes

The following discussion applies to foreign currency notes that are not denominated in or indexed to a currency that is considered "hyperinflationary," that are not CPDIs and that are not "dual currency notes." Special US tax considerations applicable to obligations that are denominated in or indexed to a hyperinflationary currency, are CPDIs or are dual currency notes that will be discussed in the applicable pricing supplement.

In general, a US Holder that uses the cash method of accounting and holds a foreign currency note will be required to include in income the US dollar value of the amount of interest income received, whether or not the payment is received in US dollars or converted into US dollars. The US dollar value of the amount of interest received is the amount of foreign currency interest paid, translated into US dollars at the spot rate on the date of receipt. The US Holder will not have exchange gain or loss on the interest payment itself, but may have exchange gain or loss when it disposes of any foreign currency received.

A US Holder that uses the accrual method of accounting is generally required to include in income the dollar value of interest accrued during the accrual period. Accrual basis US Holders may determine the amount of income recognized with respect to such interest in accordance with either of two methods. Under the first method, the dollar value of accrued interest is translated at the average rate for the interest accrual period (or, with respect to an accrual period that spans two taxable years, the partial period within the taxable year). For this purpose, the average rate is the simple average of spot rates of exchange for each business day of such period or other average exchange rate for the period reasonably derived and consistently applied by the US Holder. Under the second method, a US Holder can elect to accrue interest at the spot rate on the last day of the interest accrual period (in the case of a partial accrual period, the last day of the taxable year) or, if the last day of an interest accrual period is within five business days of the receipt, the spot rate on the date of receipt. Any such election will apply to all debt instruments held by the US Holder and will be irrevocable without the consent of the IRS. An accrual basis US Holder will recognize exchange gain or loss, as the case may be, on the receipt of a foreign currency interest payment if the exchange rate on the date payment is received differs from the rate applicable to the previous accrual of that interest income. The foreign currency gain or loss will generally be treated as US source ordinary income or loss.

OID on a foreign currency note is determined in the foreign currency and is translated into US dollars in the same manner that an accrual basis US Holder accrues stated interest. Exchange gain or loss is determined when OID is considered paid to the extent the exchange rate on the date of payment differs from the exchange rate at which the OID was accrued.

The amount of market discount on a foreign currency note includible in income will generally be determined by computing the market discount in the foreign currency and translating that amount into dollars at the spot rate on the date the foreign currency note is retired or otherwise disposed of. If the US Holder accrues market discount currently, the amount of market discount which accrues during any accrual period is determined in the foreign currency and translated into US dollars on the basis of the average exchange rate in effect during the accrual period. Exchange gain or loss may be recognized to the extent that the rate of exchange on the date of the retirement or disposition of the note differs from the exchange rate at which the market discount was accrued.

Amortizable bond premium on a foreign currency note is computed in units of foreign currency and, if the US Holder elects, will reduce interest income in units of foreign currency. At the time amortized bond premium offsets interest income (i.e., the last day of the tax year in which the election is made and the last day of each subsequent tax year), exchange gain or loss with respect to amortized bond premium is recognized and is measured by the difference between exchange rates at that time and at the time of the acquisition of the note.

With respect to the sale, exchange, retirement or other disposition of a note denominated in a foreign currency, the foreign currency amount realized will be considered to be first, the payment of accrued but unpaid interest (on which exchange gain or loss is recognized as described above); second, accrued but unpaid OID (on which exchange gain or loss is recognized as described above); and, finally, as receipt of principal. With respect to principal, exchange gain or loss is equal to the difference between (i) the foreign currency principal amount translated on the date the payment is received or the date of disposition, and (ii) the foreign currency principal amount translated on the date the note was acquired, or deemed acquired. Exchange gain or loss computed on accrued interest, OID, market discount and principal is realized, however, only to the extent of total gain or loss on the transaction. The conversion of US dollars into a foreign currency and the immediate use of that currency to purchase a foreign currency note generally will not result in a taxable gain or loss for a US Holder.

Sale, Exchange, Redemption or Repayment of the Notes

Upon the disposition of a note by sale, exchange, redemption, or repayment of principal at maturity, a US Holder will generally recognize taxable gain or loss equal to the difference between (i) the amount realized on the disposition (other than amounts attributable to accrued interest) and (ii) the US Holder's adjusted tax basis in the note. A US Holder's adjusted tax basis in a note generally will equal the cost of the note (net of accrued interest) to the US Holder, increased by amounts includible in income as OID or market discount (if the holder elects to include market discount in income on a current basis) and reduced by any amortized bond premium and any payments (other than payments of qualified stated interest) made on such note.

Because the note is held as a capital asset, such gain or loss (except to the extent that the market discount rules or the rules relating to short-term notes otherwise provide) will generally constitute capital gain or loss. Capital gains of individual taxpayers from the sale, exchange, or other disposition of a note held for more than one year may be eligible for reduced rates of taxation. The deductibility of a capital loss realized on the sale, exchange, or other disposition of a note is subject to limitations.

Disclosure Requirements for US Holders Experiencing Significant Book-Tax Differences

A US Holder that reports any item or items of income, gain, expense, or loss in respect of a note for tax purposes in an amount that differs from the amount reported for book purposes by more than \$10 million on a gross basis in any taxable year may be subject to certain disclosure requirements for "reportable transactions." Prospective investors should consult their tax advisors concerning any possible disclosure obligation with respect to the notes and penalty that may apply upon the failure to comply with such an obligation.

Tax Treatment of Non-US Holders

As used in this discussion, the term "Non-US Holder" means a beneficial owner of a note that is, for US federal income tax purposes:

a nonresident alien individual,

a foreign corporation,

a foreign partnership,

an estate whose income is not subject to US federal income tax on a net income basis, or

a trust if no court within the United States is able to exercise primary jurisdiction over its administration or if no United States persons have the authority to control all of its substantial decisions.

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Payments on the notes to Non-US Holders will not be subject to US federal income or withholding tax if the following conditions are satisfied:

the Non-US Holder does not actually or constructively own 10% or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of our stock entitled to vote,

the Non-US Holder is not a controlled foreign corporation for US federal income tax purposes that is related to us through actual or constructive ownership,

the Non-US Holder is not a bank receiving interest on a loan made in the ordinary course of its trade or business,

interest payable on the notes is not determined by reference to any receipts, sales or other cash flow, income or profits, change in the value of any property of, or any dividend or similar payment made by us or a person related to us, within the meaning of Code section 871(h)(4)(A), and

the payments are not effectively connected with a trade or business conducted by the Non-US Holder in the United States and either (a) the Non-US Holder provides a correct, complete and executed IRS Form W-8BEN, Form W-8EXP or Form W-8IMY (or successor form) with all of the attachments required by the IRS, or (b) the Non-US Holder holds its note through a qualified intermediary (generally a foreign financial institution or clearing organization or a non-US branch or office of a US financial institution or clearing organization that is a party to a withholding agreement with the IRS) which has provided to us an IRS Form W-8IMY stating that it is a qualified intermediary and has received documentation upon which it can rely to treat the payment as made to a foreign person.

If any of these exceptions apply, interest (including OID) on the notes will be subject to a 30% withholding tax when paid, unless an income tax treaty reduces or eliminates the tax or the interest is effectively connected with the conduct of a US trade or business and the Non-US Holder provides a correct, complete and executed IRS Form W-8ECI.

In general, gain realized on the sale, exchange or retirement of the notes by a Non-US Holder will not be subject to US federal income tax, unless:

the gain with respect to the notes is effectively connected with a trade or business conducted by the Non-US Holder in the United States, or

the Non-US Holder is a nonresident alien individual who holds the notes as a capital asset and is present in the United States for more than 182 days in the taxable year of the sale and certain other conditions are satisfied.

A note held by an individual who at death is a Non-US Holder will not be includible in the Non-US Holder's gross estate for US federal estate tax purposes if payments on the notes to the Non-US Holder would not have been subject to US federal income or withholding tax at the time of death under the tests described above.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding

Information reporting will apply to certain payments on a note (including interest and OID) and proceeds of the sale of a note held by a US Holder that is not an exempt recipient (such as a corporation). Backup withholding may apply to payments made to a US Holder if (a) the US Holder has failed to provide its correct taxpayer identification number on IRS Form W-9, (b) we have been notified by the IRS of an underreporting by the US Holder (underreporting generally refers to a determination by the IRS that a payee has failed to include in income on its tax return any reportable dividend and interest payments required to be shown on a tax return for a taxable year), or (c) we have been notified by the IRS that the tax identification number provided to the IRS on an information return does not match IRS records or that the number was not on the information return.

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Backup withholding and nonresident alien withholding will not be required with respect to interest paid to Non-US Holders, so long as we have received from the Non-US Holder a correct and complete IRS Form W-8BEN, W-8ECI, W-8EXP or Form W-8IMY with all of the attachments required by the IRS. Interest paid to a Non-US Holder will be reported on IRS Form 1042-S which is filed with the IRS and sent to Non-US Holders.

Information reporting and backup withholding may apply to the proceeds of a sale of a note by a Non-US Holder made within the United States or conducted through certain US related financial intermediaries, unless we receive one of the tax forms described above.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax and may be refunded (or credited against your US federal income tax liability, if any). The information reporting requirements may apply regardless of whether withholding is required. For Non-US Holders, copies of the information returns reporting such interest and withholding also may be made available to the tax authorities in the country in which a Non-US Holder is a resident under the provisions of an applicable income tax treaty or agreement.

The preceding discussion is only a summary of certain of the tax implications of an investment in notes. Prospective investors are urged to consult with their own tax advisors prior to investing to determine the tax implications of such investment in light of each such investor's particular circumstances.

SUPPLEMENTAL PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We are offering the notes on a continuing basis through agents. Any agent may sell notes to dealers at a concession not in excess of the discount it received from us. We also may sell the notes:

- (a) directly to purchasers on our own behalf; or
- (b) through any agent as principal, either at a discount from their principal amount to be agreed on at the time of sale or at 100% of their principal amount, for resale to one or more investors and other purchasers at different prices to be determined by the agent at the time of resale, which may be greater or lesser than the purchase price for those notes paid by the agent.

We will have the sole right to accept offers to purchase notes and may reject any proposed purchase of the notes in whole or part. Each agent will have the right, in its reasonably exercised discretion, to reject any offer to purchase the notes it receives in whole or in part. We will pay each agent a commission, in the form of a discount, ranging from .125% to .750% of the price offered to the public of the notes, depending on maturity, sold through that agent. Any agent may agree with us to accept a commission other than one based on maturity, in which case the commission will be set forth in the applicable pricing supplement. We and Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc., as the agent, have entered into a distribution agreement dated as of June 19, 2003, as amended, with respect to the notes. Pursuant to the terms of the distribution agreement, the agent has agreed to use its reasonable best efforts to solicit orders to purchase notes. We may also appoint additional agents to solicit offers to purchase the notes, who will enter into the above distribution agreement. Any other agents will be named in the applicable pricing supplement and any solicitation and sale of notes through those agents will be on the same terms and conditions to which the agent has agreed. The other agents or dealers through which we or the agent may sell notes may be our affiliates or customers and may engage in transactions with and perform services for us in the ordinary course of business. We also may pay fees and other amounts to an agent or an affiliate of an agent in connection with certain transactions that we enter into in connection with certain issuances of the notes, which might exceed the agent's discount.

Unless the applicable pricing supplement indicates otherwise, payment of the purchase price shall be made in funds that are immediately available in New York City.

The agents may be deemed to be "underwriters" within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended. We have agreed to indemnify the agents against or to make contributions relating to certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. We have agreed to reimburse the agents for certain expenses.

Following the initial distribution of notes, the agent or other affiliates of The Bear Stearns Companies Inc. may use this prospectus supplement in connection with offers and sales associated with market-making transactions in the notes. Each agent may act as principal or agent in the market-making transactions. The offers and sales will be made at prices that relate to prevailing prices at the time.

Any agents offering notes will not confirm sales to any accounts over which they exercise discretionary authority without the prior approval of the customer.

Because Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. is our wholly-owned subsidiary, each distribution of the notes will conform to the requirements set forth in Rule 2720 of the NASD Conduct Rules. The maximum commission or discount received by any NASD member or independent broker-dealer participating in a distribution of the notes will not be greater than eight percent of the aggregate principal amount of the offering of the notes in which such NASD member or independent broker-dealer participates.

VALIDITY OF THE NOTES

The validity of the notes will be passed on for us by Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP, New York, New York.

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GLOSSARY

Set forth below are definitions of some of the terms used in this prospectus supplement.

"Business Day" means any day that (a) is not a Saturday or Sunday, (b) in New York, New York, is not a day on which banking institutions generally are authorized or required by law or executive order to close, and (c) if the interest rate formula basis is LIBOR, is also a London Banking Day.

"Calculation Agent" means the person chosen by us to perform the duties related to interest rate calculations and resets for the floating rate notes.

"Calculation Date" means, with regard to an Interest Determination Date, the earlier of (i) the 10th calendar day after the Interest Determination Date or if that day is not a Business Day, the next Business Day or (ii) the Business Day before the applicable interest payment date, maturity date, redemption date or repayment date.

"Exchange Rate Agent" means JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. (formerly, The Chase Manhattan Bank), unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement.

"H.15(519)" means the weekly statistical release entitled "Statistical Release H.15(519), Selected Interest Rates," or any successor publication, published by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

"Index Maturity" means the period to maturity of the instrument or obligation on which the interest rate formula is based, as specified in the applicable pricing supplement.

"London Banking Day" means any day on which dealings or deposits in US dollars are transacted in the London interbank market.

"Money Market Yield" means the yield, expressed as a percentage, calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$\text{Money Market Yield} = \frac{D \times 360}{360 - (D \times M)} \times 100$$

where "D" refers to the per annum rate for commercial paper quoted on a bank discount basis and expressed as a decimal; and "M" refers to the actual number of days in the interest period for which interest is being calculated.

"Paying Agent" means JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. (formerly, The Chase Manhattan Bank), unless otherwise specified in the applicable pricing supplement.

"Reuters Screen LIBO Page" means the display designated as page "LIBO" on the Reuters Monitor Money Rates Service (or such other page as may replace the LIBO page on that service for the purpose of displaying London interbank offered rates of major banks).

"Reuters Screen NYMF Page" means the display designated as page "NYMF" on the Reuters Monitor Money Rates Service (or such other page as may replace the NYMF page on that service for the purpose of displaying prime rates or base lending rates of major US banks).

"Telerate Page 3750" means the display designated as page "3750" on the Telerate Service (or such other page as may replace the 3750 page on that service or such other service or services as may be nominated by the British Bankers' Association for the purpose of displaying London interbank offered rates for US dollar deposits).

PROSPECTUS

The Bear Stearns Companies Inc.

Debt Securities Warrants Preferred Stock Depository Shares

By this prospectus, we intend to offer at one or more times

Debt Securities
Warrants to Purchase Debt Securities
Preferred Stock
Depository Shares

in one or more series with an aggregate initial public offering price of up to \$12,410,781,162 (as described in the applicable prospectus supplement).

We will provide the specific terms of these securities in supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and any supplements carefully before you invest in the securities.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

We may use this prospectus in the initial sale of these securities. In addition, Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. or any of our other affiliates may use this prospectus in a market-making transaction in any of these or similar securities after their initial sale. **Unless we or our agent inform the purchaser otherwise in the confirmation of sale, this prospectus is being used in a market-making transaction.**

Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.

Prospectus dated February 2, 2005.

The information contained in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. You should only rely on the information incorporated by reference or provided in this prospectus or any supplement to this prospectus. We have not authorized anyone else to provide you with different information. These securities are not being offered in any state where the o