SUN COMMUNITIES INC Form 10-K March 11, 2010

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(D) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2009 Commission file number 1-12616

SUN COMMUNITIES, INC. (Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

Maryland (State of Incorporation)

27777 Franklin Rd. Suite 200 Southfield, Michigan (Address of Principal Executive Offices)

> (248) 208-2500 (Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Common Stock, Par Value \$0.01 per Share Securities Registered Pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act

New York Stock Exchange Name of each exchange on which registered

Securities Registered Pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes [] No [X]

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act. Yes[] No [X]

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes [X] No []

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes [] No []

48034

38-2730780

(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

(Zip Code)

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Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of Registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K. []

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. (Check one):

Smaller reporting company [

Large accelerated filer [] Accelerated filer [X] Non-accelerated filer []]

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes[] No [X]

As of June 30, 2009, the aggregate market value of the Registrant's stock held by non-affiliates was approximately \$229,522,000 (computed by reference to the closing sales price of the Registrant's common stock as of June 30, 2009). For this computation, the Registrant has excluded the market value of all shares of common stock reported as beneficially owned by executive officers and directors of the Registrant; such exclusion shall not be deemed to constitute an admission that any such person is an affiliate of the Registrant.

Number of shares of Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share, outstanding as of March 1, 2010: 18,830,191

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PART I

ITEM 1. BUSINESS

GENERAL

Sun Communities, Inc., a Maryland corporation, together with the Sun Communities Operating Limited Partnership, a Michigan limited partnership (the "Operating Partnership") and other consolidated subsidiaries (the "Subsidiaries") are referred to herein as the "Company", "us", "we", and "our". We are a self-administered and self-managed real estate investment trust ("REIT").

We are a fully integrated real estate company which, together with our affiliates and predecessors, has been in the business of acquiring, operating, and expanding manufactured housing communities since 1975. We lease individual parcels of land ("sites") with utility access for placement of manufactured homes and recreational vehicles to our customers. We are also engaged through a taxable subsidiary, Sun Home Services, Inc., a Michigan corporation ("SHS"), in the marketing, selling, and leasing of new and pre-owned homes to current and future residents in our communities. The operations of SHS support and enhance our occupancy levels, property performance, and cash flows.

We own, operate, and develop manufactured housing communities concentrated in the midwestern, southern, and southeastern United States. As of December 31, 2009, we owned and operated a portfolio of 136 properties located in 18 states (the "Properties", or "Property"), including 124 manufactured housing communities, 4 recreational vehicle communities, and 8 properties containing both manufactured housing and recreational vehicle sites. As of December 31, 2009, the Properties contained an aggregate of 47,572 developed sites comprised of 42,294 developed manufactured home sites, 3,176 permanent recreational vehicle sites, 2,102 seasonal recreational vehicle sites, and approximately 6,000 additional manufactured home sites suitable for development.

Our executive and principal property management office is located at 27777 Franklin Road, Suite 200, Southfield, Michigan 48034 and our telephone number is (248) 208-2500. We have regional property management offices located in Austin, Texas; Dayton, Ohio; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Elkhart, Indiana; and Orlando, Florida, and we employed an aggregate of 664 full and part time people as of December 31, 2009.

Our website address is www.suncommunities.com and we make available, free of charge, on or through our website all of our periodic reports, including our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q and current reports on Form 8-K, as soon as reasonably practicable after we file such reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Shelf Registration

Our shelf registration for up to \$300.0 million of common stock, preferred stock and debt securities expired December 31, 2008. In April 2009, we filed a new shelf registration statement on Form S-3 with the SEC to replace the previous shelf registration for a proposed offering of up to \$300.0 million of our common stock, preferred stock and debt securities. The SEC declared the new shelf registration effective in May 2009.

Derivative Instruments and Hedging Activities

We entered into three new derivative contracts during 2009 consisting of two interest rate swap agreements with a total notional amount of \$45.0 million and an interest rate cap agreement with a notional amount of \$152.4 million. We utilize these derivative instruments to manage exposure to interest rate movements thereby minimizing the effect of interest rate changes and the effect it could have on future cash flows. These derivative instruments effectively convert a portion of our variable rate debt to fixed rate debt and cap the maximum interest rate on certain variable rate borrowings. We do not enter into derivative instruments for speculative purposes. Additional information is included in Note 15 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements included herein.

Debt

Upon the maturity of our \$40.0 million floor plan facility in March 2009, we entered into a new \$10.0 million manufactured home floor plan facility. The floor plan facility initially had a committed term of one year. In February 2010, the floor plan facility was renewed indefinitely until our lender provides us 12 month notice of their intent to terminate the agreement. The interest rate is 100 basis points over the greater of Prime or 6.0 percent (effective rate 7.0 percent as of December 31, 2009). Prime means for any month, the prevailing "prime rate" as quoted in the Wall Street Journal on last day of such calendar month.

We completed a financing of \$18.5 million with Bank of America in June 2009. The loan has a three year term. The loan is secured by three properties. The interest rate is 400 basis points over LIBOR, with a minimum rate of 5.0 percent (effective rate 5.0 percent as of December 31, 2009). Proceeds of \$11.2 million were used to repay mortgage notes that matured in June 2009. The remaining proceeds were used to pay down our unsecured line of credit.

We have completed various transactions involving our installment notes secured by manufactured homes. We have received \$31.3 million of cash proceeds in exchange for relinquishing our right, title and interest in the installment notes during 2009. These transactions were recorded as a transfer of financial assets, and the cash proceeds related to these transactions were recorded as a secured borrowing. Additional information is included in Note 4 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements included herein.

Divestiture of Cable Television Service Business

In the fourth quarter of fiscal 2008, we announced our intention to exit the cable television service business. We completed the sale of the business during the third quarter ended September 30, 2009. Cash proceeds from this sale were \$0.3 million, resulting in a net gain on sale of \$0.1 million. Additional information is included in Note 2 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements included herein.

Georgia Flood Damage

On September 21, 2009, a flood caused substantial damage to our property, Countryside Village of Atlanta, located in Lawrenceville, Georgia. We have comprehensive insurance coverage for both property damage and business interruption, subject to deductibles and certain limitations. We believe the cost of the damage sustained from the flooding will be in excess of our insurance deductible. We recorded a charge of \$0.8 million during the third quarter ended September 30, 2009 associated with the flooding. This charge represents our deductible, net of expected insurance recoveries for the replacement of assets that exceed the net book value of assets damaged in the flood.

Equity Offerings

We entered into a sales agreement to issue and sell up to 1,600,000 shares of common stock from time to time pursuant to our effective shelf registration statement on Form S-3. Sales under the agreement commenced during the third quarter of 2009 and we have issued 100,000 shares of common stock through this program as of December 31, 2009. The shares of common stock were sold at the prevailing market price of our common stock at the time of each sale with a weighted average sale price of \$19.98. We received net proceeds of approximately \$1.9 million during the year ended December 31, 2009 from the sales of these shares of common stock. The proceeds were used to pay down our unsecured line of credit.

Equity Incentive Plan

At the Annual Meeting of Stockholders held on July 29, 2009, the stockholders approved the Sun Communities, Inc. Equity Incentive Plan ("2009 Equity Plan"). The 2009 Equity Plan had been adopted by the Board and was effective upon approval by our stockholders. The 2009 Equity Plan replaced the Sun Communities, Inc. Stock Option Plan adopted in 1993, amended and restated in 1996 and 2000. The 2009 Equity Plan terminates automatically July 29, 2019. The maximum number of shares of common stock that may be issued under the 2009 Equity Plan is 950,000 shares.

STRUCTURE OF THE COMPANY

The Operating Partnership is structured as an umbrella partnership REIT, or UPREIT. We contributed our net assets to the Operating Partnership in exchange for the sole general partner interest in the Operating Partnership and the majority of all the Operating Partnership's initial capital. We substantially conduct our operations through the Operating Partnership. The Operating Partnership owns, either directly or indirectly through Subsidiaries, all of our assets. This UPREIT structure enables us to comply with certain complex requirements under the Federal tax rules and regulations applicable to REITs, and to acquire manufactured housing communities in transactions that defer some or all of the sellers' tax consequences. The financial results of the Operating Partnership and the Subsidiaries are consolidated in our Consolidated Financial Statements. The financial results include certain activities that do not necessarily qualify as REIT activities under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"). We have formed taxable REIT subsidiaries, as defined in the Code, to engage in such activities. We use taxable REIT subsidiaries to offer certain services to our residents and engage in activities that would not otherwise be permitted under the REIT rules if provided directly by us or by the Operating Partnership. The taxable REIT subsidiaries include our home sales business, SHS, which provides manufactured home sales, leasing and other services to current and prospective tenants of the Properties.

We do not own all the interests in the Operating Partnership. The interests in the Operating Partnership held by limited partners other than Sun Communities, Inc. are referred to as "OP Units". The holders of Common OP Units receive distributions in an amount equal to the dividends paid to holders of our common stock. As of December 31, 2009, the Operating Partnership had a total of approximately 21.0 million units outstanding. We held approximately 18.8 million units, or 89.8% of the units (not including preferred limited partnership units) in the Operating Partnership.

THE MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY

A manufactured housing community is a residential subdivision designed and improved with sites for the placement of manufactured homes and related improvements and amenities. Manufactured homes are detached, single-family homes which are produced off-site by manufacturers and installed on sites within the community. Manufactured homes are available in a wide array of designs, providing owners with a level of customization generally unavailable in other forms of multi-family housing.

Modern manufactured housing communities, such as the Properties, contain improvements similar to other garden-style residential developments, including centralized entrances, paved streets, curbs and gutters, and parkways. In addition, these communities also often provide a number of amenities, such as a clubhouse, a swimming pool, shuffleboard courts, tennis courts, and laundry facilities.

The owner of each home on our Properties leases the site on which the home is located. We own the underlying land, utility connections, streets, lighting, driveways, common area amenities and other capital improvements and are responsible for enforcement of community guidelines and maintenance. Some of the Properties provide water and sewer service through public or private utilities, while others provide these services to residents from on-site facilities. Each owner within our Properties is responsible for the maintenance of the home and leased site. As a result, capital expenditure needs tend to be less significant relative to multi-family rental apartment complexes.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Our property management strategy emphasizes intensive, hands-on management by dedicated, on-site district and community managers. We believe that this on-site focus enables us to continually monitor and address tenant concerns, the performance of competitive properties and local market conditions. As of December 31, 2009, we employed 664 full and part time employees, of which 548 were located on-site as property managers, support staff, or maintenance personnel.

Our community managers were overseen by John B. McLaren, Chief Operating Officer, who has 14 years of manufactured housing and related financing experience, 3 Senior Vice Presidents of Operations and 12 Regional Vice Presidents. In addition, the Regional Vice Presidents are responsible for semi-annual market surveys of competitive communities, interaction with local manufactured home dealers and regular property inspections.

Each district or community manager performs regular inspections in order to continually monitor the Property's physical condition and provides managers with the opportunity to understand and effectively address tenant concerns. In addition to a district or community manager, each district or property has an on-site maintenance personnel and management support staff. We hold mandatory training sessions for all new property management personnel to ensure that management policies and procedures are executed effectively and professionally. All of our property management personnel participate in on-going training to ensure that changes to management policies and procedures are implemented consistently. We offer over 30 courses for our team members which has led to increased knowledge and accountability of the daily operations and policies and procedures.

HOME SALES AND LEASING

SHS is engaged in the marketing, selling, and leasing of new and pre-owned homes to current and future residents in our communities. Since tenants often purchase a home already on-site within a community, such services enhance occupancy and property performance. Additionally, because many of the homes on the Properties are sold through SHS, better control of home quality in our communities can be maintained than if sales services were conducted solely through third-party brokers. SHS also leases homes to prospective tenants. At December 31, 2009, SHS had 5,747 occupied leased homes in its portfolio. Homes for this rental program are purchased at discounted rates from finance companies that hold repossessed homes within our communities. New homes are purchased as necessary to supplement these repossessed home purchases. Leases associated with the rental program are, in general, one year leases. This program requires intensive management of costs associated with repair and refurbishment of these homes as the tenants vacate and the homes are re-leased, similar to apartment rentals. We have added repair and service supervisors in areas with high concentrations of rental homes to aggressively pursue cost containment programs. The program is a strategic response to capture the value inherent in the purchase of substantially discounted repossessed homes in our communities. We receive approximately 19,000 applications each year to live in our Properties, providing a significant "resident boarding" system allowing us to market purchasing a home to the best applicants and to rent to the remainder of approved applicants. Through the rental program we are able to demonstrate our product and lifestyle to the renters, while monitoring their payment history and converting qualified renters to owners.

REGULATIONS AND INSURANCE

General

Manufactured housing community properties are subject to various laws, ordinances and regulations, including regulations relating to recreational facilities such as swimming pools, clubhouses and other common areas. We believe that each Property has the necessary operating permits and approvals.

Insurance

Our management believes that the Properties are covered by adequate fire, flood (where appropriate), property and business interruption insurance provided by reputable companies with commercially reasonable deductibles and limits. We maintain a blanket policy that covers all of our Properties. We have obtained title insurance insuring fee title to the Properties in an aggregate amount which we believe to be adequate. Claims made to our insurance carriers that are determined to be recoverable are classified in other receivables as incurred.

SITE LEASES OR USAGE RIGHTS

The typical lease we enter into with a tenant for the rental of a manufactured home site is month-to-month or year-to-year, renewable upon the consent of both parties, or, in some instances, as provided by statute. In some cases (mainly in Florida), leases are for one-year terms, with up to ten renewal options exercisable by the tenant, with rent adjusted for increases in the consumer price index. Generally, market rate adjustments are made on an annual basis. These leases are cancelable for non-payment of rent, violation of community rules and regulations or other specified defaults. During the past five years, on average 3.0 percent of the homes in our communities have been removed by their owners and 6.6 percent of the homes have been sold by their owners to a new owner who then assumes rental obligations as a community resident. The cost to move a home is approximately \$4,000 to \$10,000. The above experience can be summarized as follows: the average resident remains in our communities for approximately fifteen years, while the average home, which gives rise to the rental stream, remains in our communities for approximately thirty three years.

At Properties zoned for recreational vehicle ("RV") use, our customers have short-term ("seasonal") usage rights or long-term ("permanent") usage rights. The seasonal RV customers typically prepay for their stay or leave deposits to reserve a site for the following year. Many of these RV customers do not live full time on the Property.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This Form 10-K contains various "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and we intend that such forward-looking statements will be subject to the safe harbors created thereby. For this purpose, any statements contained in this filing that relate to prospective events or developments are deemed to be forward-looking statements. Words such as "believes," "forecasts," "anticipates," "intends," "plans," "expects," "may", "will" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and financial performance, but involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties, both general and specific to the matters discussed in this filing. These risks and uncertainties may cause our actual results to be materially different from any future results expressed or implied by such forward looking statements. Such risks and uncertainties include the national, regional and local economic climates, the ability to maintain rental rates and occupancy levels, competitive market forces, changes in market rates of interest, the ability of manufactured home buyers to obtain financing, the level of repossessions by manufactured home lenders and those risks and uncertainties referenced under the headings entitled "Risk Factors" contained in this Form 10-K and our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The forward-looking

statements contained in this Form 10-K speak only as of the date hereof and we expressly disclaims any obligation to provide public updates, revisions or amendments to any forward-looking statements made herein to reflect changes in our expectations of future events.

ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS

Our prospects are subject to certain uncertainties and risks. Our future results could differ materially from current results, and our actual results could differ materially from those projected in forward-looking statements as a result of certain risk factors. These risk factors include, but are not limited to, those set forth below, other one-time events, and important factors disclosed previously and from time to time in our other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

REAL ESTATE RISKS

General economic conditions and the concentration of our properties in Michigan, Florida, Indiana, and Texas may affect our ability to generate sufficient revenue.

The market and economic conditions in our current markets generally, and specifically in metropolitan areas of our current markets, may significantly affect manufactured home occupancy or rental rates. Occupancy and rental rates, in turn, may significantly affect our revenues, and if our communities do not generate revenues sufficient to meet our operating expenses, including debt service and capital expenditures, our cash flow and ability to pay or refinance our debt obligations could be adversely affected. We derived significant amounts of rental income for the twelve months ended December 31, 2009 from properties located in Michigan, Florida, Indiana, and Texas. As of December 31, 2009, 47 of our 136 Properties representing approximately 30% of developed sites, are located in Michigan; 19 Properties representing approximately 21% of developed sites, are located in Florida; 18 Properties representing approximately 14% of developed sites, are located in Indiana; and 17 Properties representing approximately 11% of developed sites are located in Texas. As a result of the geographic concentration of our Properties in Michigan, Florida, Indiana, and Texas, we are exposed to the risks of downturns in the local economy or other local real estate market conditions which could adversely affect occupancy rates, rental rates, and property values of properties in these markets.

The following factors, among others, may adversely affect the revenues generated by our communities:

- the national and local economic climate which may be adversely impacted by, among other factors, plant closings, and industry slowdowns;
- local real estate market conditions such as the oversupply of manufactured housing sites or a reduction in demand for manufactured housing sites in an area;
 - the number of repossessed homes in a particular market;
 - the lack of an established dealer network;
- the rental market which may limit the extent to which rents may be increased to meet increased expenses without decreasing occupancy rates;
- the perceptions by prospective tenants of the safety, convenience and attractiveness of our Properties and the neighborhoods where they are located;
 - zoning or other regulatory restrictions;

competition from other available manufactured housing communities and alternative forms of housing (such as apartment buildings and site-built single-family homes);

- our ability to provide adequate management, maintenance and insurance;
- increased operating costs, including insurance premiums, real estate taxes, and utilities; and
 - the enactment of rent control laws or laws taxing the owners of manufactured homes.

REAL ESTATE RISKS, CONTINUED

Our income would also be adversely affected if tenants were unable to pay rent or if sites were unable to be rented on favorable terms. If we were unable to promptly relet or renew the leases for a significant number of the sites, or if the rental rates upon such renewal or reletting were significantly lower than expected rates, then our business and results of operations could be adversely affected. In addition, certain expenditures associated with each Property (such as real estate taxes and maintenance costs) generally are not reduced when circumstances cause a reduction in income from the Property. Furthermore, real estate investments are relatively illiquid and, therefore, will tend to limit our ability to vary our portfolio promptly in response to changes in economic or other conditions.

Competition affects occupancy levels and rents which could adversely affect our revenues.

All of our Properties are located in developed areas that include other manufactured housing community properties. The number of competitive manufactured housing community properties in a particular area could have a material adverse effect on our ability to lease sites and increase rents charged at our Properties or at any newly acquired properties. We may be competing with others with greater resources and whose officers and directors have more experience than our officers and directors. In addition, other forms of multi-family residential properties, such as private and federally funded or assisted multi-family housing projects and single-family housing, provide housing alternatives to potential tenants of manufactured housing communities.

Our ability to sell or lease manufactured homes may be affected by various factors, which may in turn adversely affect our profitability.

SHS operates in the manufactured home market offering manufactured home sales and leasing services to tenants and prospective tenants of our communities. The market for the sale and lease of manufactured homes may be adversely affected by the following factors:

- downturns in economic conditions which adversely impact the housing market;
 - an oversupply of, or a reduced demand for, manufactured homes;
- the difficulty facing potential purchasers in obtaining affordable financing as a result of heightened lending criteria; and
- an increase or decrease in the rate of manufactured home repossessions which provide aggressively priced competition to new manufactured home sales.

Any of the above listed factors could adversely impact our rate of manufactured home sales and leases, which would result in a decrease in profitability.

Increases in taxes and regulatory compliance costs may reduce our revenue.

Costs resulting from changes in real estate laws, income taxes, service or other taxes, generally are not passed through to tenants under leases and may adversely affect our funds from operations and our ability to pay or refinance our debt. Similarly, changes in laws increasing the potential liability for environmental conditions existing on properties or increasing the restrictions on discharges or other conditions may result in significant unanticipated expenditures, which would adversely affect our business and results of operations.

REAL ESTATE RISKS, CONTINUED

We may not be able to integrate or finance our development activities.

From time to time, we engage in the construction and development of new communities, and may continue to engage in the development and construction business in the future. Our development and construction business may be exposed to the following risks which are in addition to those risks associated with the ownership and operation of established manufactured housing communities:

- we may not be able to obtain financing with favorable terms for community development which may make us unable to proceed with the development;
- we may be unable to obtain, or face delays in obtaining, necessary zoning, building and other governmental permits and authorizations, which could result in increased costs and delays, and even require us to abandon development of the community entirely if we are unable to obtain such permits or authorizations;
- we may abandon development opportunities that we have already begun to explore and as a result we may not recover expenses already incurred in connection with exploring such development opportunities;
- we may be unable to complete construction and lease-up of a community on schedule resulting in increased debt service expense and construction costs;
- we may incur construction and development costs for a community which exceed our original estimates due to increased materials, labor or other costs, which could make completion of the community uneconomical and we may not be able to increase rents to compensate for the increase in development costs which may impact our profitability;
- we may be unable to secure long-term financing on completion of development resulting in increased debt service and lower profitability; and
- occupancy rates and rents at a newly developed community may fluctuate depending on several factors, including market and economic conditions, which may result in the community not being profitable.

If any of the above occurred, our business and results of operations could be adversely affected.

We may not be able to integrate or finance our acquisitions and our acquisitions may not perform as expected.

We acquire and intend to continue to acquire manufactured housing communities on a select basis. Our acquisition activities and their success are subject to the following risks:

- we may be unable to acquire a desired property because of competition from other well capitalized real estate investors, including both publicly traded real estate investment trusts and institutional investment funds;
- even if we enter into an acquisition agreement for a property, it is usually subject to customary conditions to closing, including completion of due diligence investigations to our satisfaction, which may not be satisfied;
- even if we are able to acquire a desired property, competition from other real estate investors may significantly increase the purchase price;

- we may be unable to finance acquisitions on favorable terms;
 - acquired properties may fail to perform as expected;
- acquired properties may be located in new markets where we face risks associated with a lack of market knowledge or understanding of the local economy, lack of business relationships in the area and unfamiliarity with local governmental and permitting procedures; and
- we may be unable to quickly and efficiently integrate new acquisitions, particularly acquisitions of portfolios of properties, into our existing operations.

If any of the above occurred, our business and results of operations could be adversely affected.

REAL ESTATE RISKS, CONTINUED