

WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORP
Form S-3ASR
March 03, 2010

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 3, 2010

Registration No. 333-
Registration No. 333-

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington D.C. 20549

Form S-3

REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

Wintrust Financial Corporation

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Wintrust Capital Trust VI

(Exact name of Co-Registrant as specified in its charter)

Illinois

*(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation of organization)*

36-3873352

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

Delaware

*(State or other jurisdiction
of
incorporation of
organization)*

To be applied for

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

727 North Bank Lane
Lake Forest, IL 60045
(847) 615-4096

*(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of Registrant s
and Additional Registrants principal executive offices)*

David A. Dykstra

Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

727 North Bank Lane
Lake Forest, IL 60045
(847) 615-4096

*(Name and address, including zip code, and telephone number,
including area code, of agent for service for Registrant and Additional Registrants)*

Copy to:

Lisa J. Reategui, Esq.
Sidley Austin LLP
One South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60603
(312) 853-7000

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after this Registration Statement becomes effective.

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

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

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

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

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of large accelerated filer, accelerated filer and smaller reporting company in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/>	Accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/> (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)	Smaller reporting company <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	---

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered(3)	Amount to be Registered(1)	Proposed Maximum Offering Price per Unit(1)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(1)	Amount of Registration Fee(2)
Debt Securities				
Common Shares, no par value				

Preferred Shares, no par value
Depository Shares
Warrants
Stock Purchase Contracts
Stock Purchase Units
Trust Preferred Securities of
Wintrust Capital Trust VI
Junior Subordinated Debentures
Guarantee of Wintrust Financial
Corporation with respect to
Trust Preferred Securities of
Wintrust Capital Trust VI

- (1) Omitted pursuant to General Instructions II.E of Form S-3. An indeterminate amount of securities as may from time to time to be issued at indeterminate prices is being registered pursuant to this registration statement.
 - (2) In accordance with Rules 456(b) and 457(r), the Registrants are deferring payment of all registration fees.
 - (3) The securities registered under this registration statement may be sold separately, together or as units with other securities registered under this registration statement and may include hybrid securities consisting of a combination of features of any of the securities listed in the table.
-

PROSPECTUS

Wintrust Financial Corporation

**Debt Securities, Common Shares, Preferred Shares, Depositary Shares,
Warrants, Stock Purchase Contracts, Stock Purchase Units, Junior
Subordinated Debentures, Guarantee of Trust Preferred Securities
and Hybrid Securities Combining Elements of the Foregoing**

Wintrust Capital Trust VI

Trust Preferred Securities

This prospectus relates to the potential offer and sale, in one or more offerings, of debt securities, common shares, preferred shares, depositary shares, warrants, stock purchase contracts, stock purchase units, trust preferred securities, junior subordinated debentures, guarantee of trust preferred securities and hybrid securities combining elements of the foregoing. We will describe the specific terms of the securities in one or more supplements to this prospectus at the time of each offering. Those terms may include maturity, interest rate, sinking fund terms, currency of payments, dividends, redemption terms, listing on a securities exchange, amount payable at maturity, conversion or exchange rights, liquidation amount, subsidiary guarantees and subordination.

The securities may be offered on a continuous or delayed basis from time to time directly or through underwriters, dealers or agents and in one or more public or private transactions and at fixed prices, prevailing market prices, at prices related to prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices. If any offering involves underwriters, dealers or agents, we will describe the arrangements with them in the prospectus supplement that relates to that offering. This prospectus may not be used to offer and sell the securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement. A prospectus supplement may add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, as well as the documents incorporated and deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus, carefully before you invest.

Our common stock is quoted on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the trading symbol **WTFC**. On March 2, 2010, the closing sale price on The NASDAQ Global Select Market for our common stock was \$34.23. None of the other securities that may be offered pursuant to this prospectus are listed on an exchange.

Investing in our securities involves risk. See **Risk Factors on page 2 of this prospectus.**

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.

These securities will not be savings accounts, deposits or other obligations of any bank or nonbank subsidiary of ours and are not insured or guaranteed by the FDIC or any other governmental agency.

The date of this prospectus is March 3, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Special Notes Concerning Forward-Looking Statements</u>	ii
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	ii
<u>Documents Incorporated By Reference</u>	iii
<u>Prospectus Summary</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	2
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	2
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	2
<u>General Description of Securities</u>	2
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	3
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	9
<u>Description of Stock Purchase Contracts and Stock Purchase Units</u>	17
<u>Description of Warrants</u>	18
<u>Description Of The Trust</u>	18
<u>Description Of Trust Preferred Securities</u>	20
<u>Description Of Junior Subordinated Debentures</u>	30
<u>Description Of Guarantee</u>	35
<u>Certain ERISA Considerations</u>	38
<u>Book-Entry System</u>	38
<u>Plan Of Distribution</u>	40
<u>Legal Matters</u>	42
<u>Experts</u>	42

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of an automatic registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, as a well-known seasoned issuer as defined in Rule 405 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, utilizing a shelf registration process. Under this shelf process, we may, from time to time, offer and sell, in one or more offerings, the securities described in this prospectus. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we use this prospectus to offer these securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. Please carefully read this prospectus and the prospectus supplement together with the additional information described under the heading Where You Can Find More Information.

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and in any accompanying prospectus supplement. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different information. This document may only be used where it is legal to sell these securities. We are not making an offer of these securities in any state where the offer is not permitted. You should only assume that the information in this prospectus or in any prospectus supplement is accurate as of the date on the front of the document. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since that date.

Each reference in this prospectus to Wintrust or the Company, means Wintrust Financial Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries, unless the context requires otherwise. Each reference in this prospectus to the trust or the Trust refers to Wintrust Capital Trust VI. The terms we, us and our refer to Wintrust when discussing the securities to be issued by Wintrust, the Trust when discussing the securities to be issued by the Trust and collectively to all of the Registrants where the context requires.

SPECIAL NOTES CONCERNING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus, the documents that we incorporate by reference and any related prospectus supplement may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws statements that are statements concerning our expectations, plans, objectives, future financial performance and other items that are not historical facts. These statements are forward looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results or outcomes to differ materially from those included in the forward looking statements. In connection with the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, the Registrants are filing herein or incorporated by reference cautionary statements identifying important factors that could cause their respective actual results to differ materially from those projected in forward looking statements (as such term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995) made by or on behalf of the Registrants. Any statements that express or involve discussions as to expectations, beliefs, plans, objectives, assumptions or future events, performance or growth (often, but not always, through the use of words or phrases such as intend, plan, project, expect, anticipate, believe, estimate, co possible, point, will, may, should, would, could and similar expressions) are not statements of historical fact or forward looking. Forward looking statements involve estimates, assumptions and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed in the forward looking statements. Accordingly, any such statements are qualified in their entirety by reference to, and are accompanied by, the important factors described in the sections of Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 filed with the SEC on March 1, 2010 entitled Risk Factors and Forward-Looking Statements that could cause a Registrant's actual results to differ materially from those contained in forward looking statements of such Registrant made by or on behalf of such Registrant.

All such factors are difficult to predict, contain uncertainties that may materially affect actual results and are beyond the control of the Registrants. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on forward looking statements. Any forward looking statement speaks only as of the date on which such statement is made, and the Registrants undertake no obligation to update any forward looking statement or statements to reflect events or circumstances after the date on which such statement is made or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events. New factors emerge from time to time, and it is not possible for each Registrant's management to predict all of such factors, nor can such management assess the impact of each such factor on the business of such Registrant or the extent to which any factor, or combination of factors, may cause actual results of such Registrant to differ materially from those contained in any forward looking statements.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly, and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Our SEC filings are available to the public over the Internet at the SEC's web site at <http://www.sec.gov> and on the investor relations page of our website at <http://www.wintrust.com>. Except for those SEC filings incorporated by reference in this prospectus, none of the other information on our website is part of this prospectus. You may also read and copy any document we file with the SEC at its public reference facilities at 100 F Street N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. You can also obtain copies of the documents upon the payment of a duplicating fee to the SEC. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the public reference facilities.

This prospectus omits some information contained in the registration statement in accordance with SEC rules and regulations. You should review the information and exhibits included in the registration statement for further information about us and the securities we are offering. Statements in this prospectus concerning any document we

filed as an exhibit to the registration statement or that we otherwise filed with the SEC are not intended to be comprehensive and are qualified by reference to these filings. You should review the complete document to evaluate these statements.

We have not included separate financial statements of the Trust. Wintrust and the Trust do not consider that such financial statements would be material to holders of Trust Preferred Securities of the Trust because

the Trust is a special purpose entity, has no operating history and has no independent operations. The Trust is not currently involved in and does not anticipate being involved in any activity other than as described under Prospectus Summary The Trust . Further, Wintrust and the Trust believe that financial statements of the Trust are not material to the holders of the Trust Preferred Securities of the Trust since Wintrust Financial will guarantee the Trust Preferred Securities of the Trust. Holders of the Trust Preferred Securities of the Trust, with respect to the payment of distributions and amounts upon liquidation, dissolution and winding-up, are at least in the same position vis-à-vis the assets of Wintrust as a preferred stockholder of Wintrust. Wintrust beneficially owns all of the undivided beneficial interests in the assets of the Trust (other than the beneficial interests represented by the Trust Preferred Securities of the Trusts). See Prospectus Summary The Trust , Description of the Trust and Trust Preferred Securities. In the event that the Trust issues securities, our filings under the Exchange Act will include an audited footnote to Wintrust s annual financial statements stating that the Trust is wholly owned by Wintrust, that the sole asset of the Trust is the Senior Debentures or the Subordinated Debentures of Wintrust having a specified aggregate principal amount, and that, considered together, the back-up undertakings, including the Guarantees of Wintrust, constitute a full and unconditional guarantee by Wintrust of the Trust s obligations under any Trust Preferred Securities issued by the Trust.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference much of the information that we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those publicly available documents. The information that we incorporate by reference is an important part of this prospectus. Any statement contained in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus will be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in this prospectus or any other subsequently filed document that is deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus modifies or supersedes the statement. Any statement so modified or superseded will not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus.

This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents listed below and any filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14, or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 after the initial filing of the registration statement related to this prospectus until the termination of the offering of the securities described in this prospectus; provided, however, that we are not incorporating by reference any documents, portions of documents or other information that is deemed to have been furnished and not filed with the SEC:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009, including information specifically incorporated by reference into our Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009;

the sections of our Definitive Proxy Statement for the 2009 Annual Meeting of Stockholders filed with the SEC on April 20, 2009 that are incorporated by reference in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008;

our Current Report on Form 8-K, filed with the SEC on August 20, 2009; and

the description of our common stock, which is registered under Section 12 of the Securities Exchange Act, in our Form 8-A filed with the SEC on January 3, 1997, including any subsequently filed amendments and reports updating such description.

You may request a copy of these filings, other than an exhibit to a filing unless that exhibit is specifically incorporated by reference into that filing, at no cost, by writing to us at the following address or calling us at the following telephone number:

Investor Relations
Wintrust Financial Corporation
727 North Bank Lane
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045
(847) 615-4096

You should rely only on the information incorporated by reference or provided in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone else to provide you with different information or to make any representations other than as contained in this prospectus or in any prospectus supplement. We are not making any offer of these securities in any state where the offer is not permitted.

PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

Wintrust

Wintrust Financial Corporation, an Illinois corporation, which was incorporated in 1992, is a financial holding company based in Lake Forest, Illinois, with total assets of approximately \$12.2 billion as of December 31, 2009. We conduct our businesses through three segments: community banking, specialty finance and wealth management.

We provide community-oriented, personal and commercial banking services to customers located in the greater Chicago, Illinois metropolitan area and in southeastern Wisconsin through our fifteen wholly owned banking subsidiaries (collectively, the **banks**), as well as the origination and purchase of residential mortgages for sale into the secondary market through our wholly owned subsidiary, Wintrust Mortgage Corporation.

We provide financing for the payment of commercial insurance premiums and life insurance premiums (**premium finance receivables**) on a national basis through our wholly owned subsidiary, First Insurance Funding Corporation, and short-term accounts receivable financing (**Tricom finance receivables**) and out-sourced administrative services through our wholly owned subsidiary, Tricom, Inc. of Milwaukee.

We provide a full range of wealth management services primarily to customers in the Chicago, Illinois metropolitan area and in southeastern Wisconsin through three separate subsidiaries, including Wayne Hummer Trust Company, N.A. (**WHTC**), Wayne Hummer Investments, LLC (**WHI**) and Wayne Hummer Asset Management Company (**WHAMC**). WHTC, WHI and WHAMC are referred to collectively as the **Wayne Hummer Companies**.

Our common stock is traded on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the ticker symbol **WTFC**. Our principal executive office is located at 727 North Bank Lane, Lake Forest, Illinois, 60045, telephone number: (847) 615-4096.

The Trust

The Trust is a statutory business trust formed under the Delaware Statutory Trust Act pursuant to (i) a trust agreement executed by Wintrust, as sponsor, and the trustees of the Trust (the **Trustees**) and (ii) the filing of a certificate of trust with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware. At the time of public issuance of Trust Preferred Securities of the Trust, the trust agreement will be amended and restated in its entirety (as so amended and restated, the **Trust Agreement**) and will be qualified as an indenture under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended (the **Trust Indenture Act**). In exchange for our capital contribution to the Trust, we will own all of the common securities of the trust. The trust exists exclusively for the following purposes:

issuing the trust preferred securities to the public for cash;

issuing the common securities to us;

investing the proceeds from the sale of its preferred and common securities in an equivalent amount of junior subordinated debentures to be issued by us; and

engaging in activities that are incidental to those listed above, such as receiving payments on the debentures and making distributions to security holders, furnishing notices and other administrative tasks.

Edgar Filing: WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3ASR

A detailed description of the general terms of the trust preferred securities is set forth in Description of the Trust Preferred Securities and the applicable prospectus supplement will set forth the specific terms of any trust preferred securities.

The Trust's principal executive offices are located at 727 North Bank Lane, Lake Forest, Illinois, 60045, telephone number: (847) 615-4096.

RISK FACTORS

Our business is subject to uncertainties and risks. You should carefully consider and evaluate all of the information included and incorporated by reference in this prospectus, including the risk factors incorporated by reference from our most recent annual report on Form 10-K, as updated by our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q and other SEC filings filed after such annual report. It is possible that our business, financial condition, liquidity or results of operations could be materially adversely affected by any of these risks.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Except as otherwise provided in the related prospectus supplement, we will use the net proceeds from the sale by the Company of the offered securities for general corporate purposes. These purposes may include:

repayments or refinancing of debt;

working capital;

capital expenditures;

acquisitions; and

repurchase or redemption of our securities including our preferred shares, common shares or warrants.

Pending such use, we may temporarily invest the net proceeds in short-term securities or reduce our short-term indebtedness, or we may hold the net proceeds in deposit accounts in our subsidiary banks.

The Trust will invest all proceeds received from the sale of its preferred securities and common securities in a particular series of subordinated debt securities of Wintrust Financial Corporation.

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

Our historical ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the periods indicated are set forth in the table below. The ratio of earnings to fixed charges is computed by dividing (1) income before income taxes and fixed charges by (2) total fixed charges. For purposes of computing these ratios:

fixed charges, excluding interest on deposits, include interest expense (other than on deposits) and the estimated portion of rental expense attributable to interest, net of income from subleases; and

fixed charges, including interest on deposits, include all interest expense and the estimated portion of rental expense attributable to interest, net of income from subleases.

Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges	Year Ended December 31,				
	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Including interest on deposits	1.54x	1.11x	1.24x	1.34x	1.55x
Excluding interest on deposits	3.64x	1.60x	2.52x	3.41x	4.08x

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES

We may offer under this prospectus debt securities, common shares, preferred shares, depositary shares, warrants, stock purchase contracts, stock purchase units, junior subordinated debentures, guarantee of trust preferred securities or any combination of the foregoing, either individually or as units consisting of two or more securities. The trust may offer trust preferred securities under this prospectus.

The following description of the terms of these securities sets forth some of the general terms and provisions of securities that we may offer. The particular terms of securities offered by any prospectus supplement and the extent, if any, to which the general terms set forth below do not apply to those securities, will be described in the related prospectus supplement. In addition, if we offer securities as units, the terms of the units will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement. If the information contained in the prospectus supplement differs from the following description, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

Debt May be Senior or Subordinated

We may issue, and offer pursuant to this prospectus, senior or subordinated debt securities. The senior debt securities and, in the case of debt securities in bearer form, any coupons to these securities, will constitute part of our senior debt and, except as otherwise included in the applicable prospectus supplement, will rank on a parity with all of our other unsecured and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated debt securities and any coupons will constitute part of our subordinated debt and will be subordinate and junior in right of payment to all of our senior indebtedness, which will be defined in the applicable prospectus supplement. If this prospectus is being delivered in connection with a series of subordinated debt securities, the accompanying prospectus supplement or the information we incorporate in this prospectus by reference will indicate the approximate amount of senior indebtedness outstanding as of the end of the most recent fiscal quarter. Our debt securities will be issued under an indenture, the form of which is included as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

The following briefly summarizes the material provisions of the indenture, which has been filed with the SEC and incorporated by reference in the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. This summary of the indenture is not complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the indentures. You should read the more detailed provisions of the indenture, including the defined terms, for provisions that may be important to you. You should also read the particular terms of a series of debt securities, which will be described in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Payments

We may issue debt securities from time to time in one or more series. The provisions of the indenture allow us to reopen a previous issue of a series of debt securities and issue additional debt securities of that issue. The debt securities may be denominated and payable in U.S. dollars.

Debt securities may bear interest at a fixed rate or a floating rate, which, in either case, may be zero, or at a rate that varies during the lifetime of the debt security. Debt securities may be sold at a discount below their stated principal amount.

Terms Specified in Prospectus Supplement

The prospectus supplement will contain, where applicable, the following terms of and other information relating to any offered debt securities:

classification as senior or subordinated debt securities and the specific designation;

aggregate principal amount, purchase price and denomination;

the currency in which the debt securities are denominated and/or in which principal and/or interest, if any, is payable;

date of maturity;

the interest rate or rates or the method by which the calculation agent will determine the interest rate or rates, if any;

the interest payment dates, if any;

the place or places for payment of the principal of and any premium and/or interest on the debt securities;

any repayment, redemption, prepayment or sinking fund provisions, including any redemption notice provisions;

whether we will issue the debt securities in registered form or bearer form or both and, if we are offering debt securities in bearer form, any restrictions applicable to the exchange of one form for

another and to the offer, sale and delivery of those debt securities in bearer form and whether such bearer securities will be issued with coupons;

whether we will issue the debt securities in definitive form and under what terms and conditions;

the terms on which holders of the debt securities may convert or exchange these securities into or for common or preferred stock or other securities of ours offered hereby, into or for common or preferred stock or other securities of an entity affiliated with us or debt or equity or other securities of an entity not affiliated with us, or for the cash value of our stock or any of the above securities, the terms on which conversion or exchange may occur, including whether conversion or exchange is mandatory, at the option of the holder or at our option, the period during which conversion or exchange may occur, the initial conversion or exchange price or rate and the circumstances or manner in which the amount of common or preferred stock or other securities issuable upon conversion or exchange may be adjusted;

information as to the methods for determining the amount of principal or interest payable on any date and/or the currencies, securities or baskets of securities, commodities or indices to which the amount payable on that date is linked;

any agents for the debt securities, including trustees, depositories, authenticating or paying agents, transfer agents or registrars;

any applicable United States federal income tax consequences, including:

whether and under what circumstances we will pay additional amounts on debt securities held by a person who is not a U.S. person for any tax, assessment or governmental charge withheld or deducted and, if so, whether we will have the option to redeem those debt securities rather than pay the additional amounts;

tax considerations applicable to any discounted debt securities or to debt securities issued at par that are treated as having been issued at a discount for United States federal income tax purposes;

tax considerations applicable to any debt securities denominated and payable in foreign currencies; and

any other specific terms of the debt securities, including any additional events of default or covenants, and any terms required by or advisable under applicable laws or regulations.

any other terms and conditions set forth therein.

Registration and Transfer of Debt Securities

Holders may present debt securities for exchange, and holders of registered debt securities may present these securities for transfer, in the manner, at the places and subject to the restrictions stated in the debt securities and described in the applicable prospectus supplement. We will provide these services without charge except for any tax or other governmental charge payable in connection with these services and subject to any limitations provided in the applicable indenture.

If any of the securities are held in global form, the procedures for transfer of interests in those securities will depend upon the procedures of the depository for those global securities.

Subordination Provisions

Subordinated debt securities will be subordinate and junior in right of payment, to the extent and in the manner stated in the applicable prospectus supplement, to all of our senior indebtedness.

Unless all principal of and any premium or interest on the senior indebtedness has been paid in full, or provision has been made to make these payments in full, no payment of principal of, or any premium or interest on, any subordinated debt securities may be made in the event:

of any insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings, or any receivership, liquidation, reorganization or other similar proceedings involving us or a substantial part of our property;

that (a) a default has occurred in the payment of principal, any premium, interest or other monetary amounts due and payable on any senior indebtedness or (b) there has occurred any other event of default concerning senior indebtedness that permits the holder or holders of the senior indebtedness to accelerate the maturity of the senior indebtedness, with notice or passage of time, or both, and that event of default has continued beyond the applicable grace period, if any, and that default or event of default has not been cured or waived or has not ceased to exist; or

that the principal of and accrued interest on any subordinated debt securities have been declared due and payable upon an event of default and that declaration has not been rescinded and annulled as provided under the applicable supplemental indenture.

Covenants Affecting Mergers and Other Significant Corporate Actions

Merger, Consolidation, Sale, Lease or Conveyance. The indenture provides that we will not merge or consolidate with any other person and will not sell, lease or convey all or substantially all of our assets to any other person, unless:

we will be the continuing corporation; or

the successor corporation or person that acquires all or substantially all of our assets:

will be a corporation organized under the laws of the United States, a state of the United States or the District of Columbia; and

will expressly assume all of our obligations under the indenture and the debt securities issued under the indenture; and

immediately prior to or after giving effect to the merger, consolidation, sale, lease or conveyance, we or that successor corporation will not be in default in the performance of the covenants and conditions of the indenture.

Absence of Protections Against All Potential Actions of Wintrust. There are no covenants or other provisions in the indenture that would afford holders of debt securities additional protection in the event of a recapitalization transaction, a change of control of Wintrust or a highly leveraged transaction. The merger covenant described above would only apply if the recapitalization transaction, change of control or highly leveraged transaction were structured to include a merger or consolidation of Wintrust or a sale, lease or conveyance of all or substantially all of our assets. However, we may provide specific protections, such as a put right or increased interest, for particular debt securities, which we would describe in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Events of Default

The indenture provides holders of debt securities with remedies if we fail to perform specific obligations, such as making payments on the debt securities or other indebtedness, or if we become bankrupt. Holders should review these

provisions and understand which of our actions trigger an event of default and which actions do not. The indenture permits the issuance of debt securities in one or more series, and, in many cases, whether an event of default has occurred is determined on a series-by-series basis.

An event of default is defined under the indenture, with respect to any series of debt securities issued under that indenture, as being:

default in payment of any principal of the debt securities of that series, either at maturity or upon any redemption or otherwise;

default for 30 days in payment of any interest on any debt securities of that series;

default for 60 days after written notice in the observance or performance of any covenant or agreement in the debt securities of that series or the related indenture (other than a covenant or warranty with respect to the debt securities of that series the breach or nonperformance of which is otherwise included in the definition of event of default);

specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization;

failure to make any payment at maturity, including any applicable grace period, on any indebtedness under the indenture in an amount in excess of \$10,000,000 and continuance of that failure for a period of 30 days after written notice of the failure to us by the applicable trustee, or to us and the applicable trustee by the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding indebtedness under the indenture, treated as one class;

default with respect to any indebtedness under the indenture in excess of \$10,000,000 which default would have resulted in such indebtedness becoming or being declared due and payable prior to the date on which it would otherwise have come due and payable, without such indebtedness having been discharged or the acceleration having been cured, waived, rescinded or annulled for a period of 30 days after written notice of the acceleration to us by the applicable trustee, or to us and the applicable trustee by the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of such indebtedness, treated as one class; or

any other event of default provided in a board resolution, an officer's certificate or the supplemental indenture under which that series of debt securities is issued.

If a failure, default or acceleration referred to in the fifth and sixth clauses above ceases or is cured, waived, rescinded or annulled, then the event of default under the applicable indenture caused by that failure, default or acceleration will also be considered cured.

Acceleration of Debt Securities upon an Event of Default. The indenture provides that:

if an event of default (other than events of default relating to certain specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization) occurs and is continuing, either the trustee or the holders of not less than 50% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each affected series, voting as one class, by notice in writing to Wintrust and to the trustee, if given by security holders, may declare the principal of all debt securities of each affected series and interest accrued thereon to be due and payable immediately; and

if an event of default due to specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of Wintrust occurs and is continuing, then the principal of all those debt securities, interest accrued thereon will become immediately due and payable without any declaration or other act by the trustee or any security holder.

Annulment of Acceleration and Waiver of Defaults. In some circumstances, with respect to a series, if any and all events of default under the indenture, other than the non-payment of the principal of or interest on the securities that has become due as a result of an acceleration, have been cured, waived or otherwise remedied, then the holders of a

majority in aggregate principal amount of such series of outstanding debt securities affected, voting as one class, may annul past declarations of acceleration of or waive past defaults of the debt securities in such series.

Indemnification of Trustee for Actions Taken on Your Behalf. The indenture contains a provision entitling the trustee, subject to the duty of the trustee during a default to act with the required standard of care, to be indemnified by the holders of debt securities issued under the indenture before proceeding to

exercise any trust or power at the request of holders. Subject to these provisions and some other limitations, the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of each series of outstanding debt securities, voting as one class, may, with respect to debt securities of that class, direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the applicable trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee.

Limitation on Actions by You as an Individual Holder. The indenture provides that no individual holder of debt securities may institute any action against us under the indenture, except actions for payment of overdue principal and interest, unless the following actions have occurred:

the holder must have previously given written notice to the trustee of the continuing default;

the holders of not less than 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each affected series, treated as one class, must have (1) requested the trustee to institute that action and (2) offered the trustee reasonable indemnity;

the trustee must have failed to institute that action within 60 days after receipt of the request referred to above; and

during such 60-day period, the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each affected series, voting as one class, must not have given directions to the trustee inconsistent with those of the holders referred to above.

Annual Certification. The indenture contains a covenant that we will file annually with the trustee a certificate of no default or a certificate specifying any default that exists.

Discharge, Defeasance and Covenant Defeasance

We have the ability to eliminate most or all of our obligations on any series of debt securities prior to maturity if we comply with the following provisions.

Discharge. Under the indenture, we may discharge specific obligations to holders of any series of debt securities (1) that have been delivered to the trustee for cancellation or (2) that either have become due and payable or will, within one year, become due and payable or scheduled for redemption, by depositing with the trustee, in trust, funds in an amount sufficient to pay when due, whether at maturity or upon redemption, the principal of and interest on the debt securities to the stated maturity or redemption date, as the case may be.

Defeasance and Covenant Defeasance. If the provisions in the indenture relating to defeasance and covenant defeasance are applicable to the debt securities of any series, we may elect either:

defeasance, which means we elect to defease and be discharged from any and all obligations with respect to the debt securities, except for the obligations to register the transfer or exchange of the debt securities, to replace destroyed, lost or stolen debt securities, to maintain an office or agency in respect of the debt securities and to hold moneys for payment in trust; or

covenant defeasance, which means we may elect to be released from our obligations with respect to the debt securities under specified provisions of the indenture relating to (1) delivery to the trustee of certain reports and certificates, (2) the Company's ability to consolidate or merge with or into or sell, assign, transfer, lease, convey or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of its assets, and (3) any additional covenants contained in a supplemental indenture for a particular series of debt securities or a board resolution or officers' certificate

delivered pursuant to the indenture, and any failure to comply with such obligations will not constitute an event of default with respect to the debt securities;

in either case upon the irrevocable deposit by us with the trustee, in trust, of an amount, in cash and/or U.S. government obligations, sufficient to make scheduled payments of the principal of and interest on the debt securities, when due, whether at maturity, upon redemption or otherwise, and any mandatory sinking fund payments.

Defeasance will only be permitted if, among other things:

we have delivered to the trustee an opinion of counsel to the effect that the holders of the debt securities will not recognize income, gain or loss for federal income tax purposes as a result of the defeasance or covenant defeasance and will be subject to federal income tax on the same amounts, in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the defeasance or covenant defeasance had not occurred, and the opinion of counsel, in the case of defeasance, will be required to refer to and be based upon a ruling of the Internal Revenue Service or a change in applicable U.S. federal income tax law occurring after the date of the indenture;

no event of default has occurred or is continuing;

the deposit of funds will not result in a breach or violation of, or constitute a default under, the indenture or any other material agreement or instrument to which we are a party or by which we are bound;

certain other provisions set forth in the indenture are met; and

we have delivered to the trustee an officers' certificate and an opinion of counsel, each stating that all conditions precedent to the defeasance or covenant defeasance have been complied with.

The applicable prospectus supplement may further describe the provisions, if any, permitting defeasance or covenant defeasance, including any modifications to the provisions described above, with respect to the debt securities of a particular series.

Modification of the Indenture

Modification Without Consent of Holders. We and the applicable trustee may enter into supplemental indentures without the consent of the holders of debt securities issued under a particular indenture to, among other things:

secure any debt securities;

evidence the assumption by a successor corporation of our obligations;

add covenants for the protection of the holders of debt securities;

add additional events of default;

cure any ambiguity or correct any inconsistency;

establish the forms or terms of debt securities of any series; or

evidence the acceptance of appointment by a successor trustee.

Modification with Consent of Holders. We and the applicable trustee, with the consent of the holders of not less than a majority in aggregate principal amount of each affected series of outstanding debt securities, each affected series voting as a separate class, may add any provisions to, or change in any manner or eliminate any of the provisions of, the applicable indenture or modify in any manner the rights of the holders of those debt securities. However, we and the trustee may not, among other things, make any of the following changes to any outstanding debt security without the consent of each holder that would be affected by such change:

extend the final maturity of the principal;

reduce the principal amount;

reduce the rate or extend the time of payment of interest;

reduce any amount payable on redemption;

change the currency in which the principal, any amount of original issue discount, or interest thereon is payable;

reduce the amount of any original issue discount security payable upon acceleration or provable in bankruptcy;

alter the terms on which holders of the debt securities may convert or exchange debt securities for stock or other securities of Wintrust or of other entities or for other property or the cash value of the property, other than in accordance with the antidilution provisions or other similar adjustment provisions included in the terms of the debt securities;

alter certain provisions of the indenture relating to debt securities not denominated in U.S. dollars;

impair the right of any holder to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment on any debt security when due; or

reduce the percentage of debt securities the consent of whose holders is required for modification of the indenture.

Governing Law

Unless otherwise specified in a prospectus supplement, the debt securities and the indenture will be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Illinois.

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

Below is a brief description of our capital stock. This description does not purport to be complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation, as Amended, our Amended and Restated By-laws, the Statement of Resolution Establishing Series of Junior Serial Preferred Stock A, the Amended and Restated Certificate of Designations of 8.00% Non-Cumulative Perpetual Convertible Preferred Stock, Series A, or the Series A Certificate of Designations, and the Certificate of Designations of Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series B, or the Series B Certificate of Designations.

Authorized Capital Stock

Under Wintrust's amended and restated articles of incorporation, as amended, Wintrust has the authority to issue 60 million shares of common stock, no par value per share, and 20 million shares of preferred stock, no par value per share. Of the 20 million shares of preferred stock, 50,000 have been designated 8.00% Non-Cumulative Perpetual Convertible Preferred Stock, Series A, or the series A preferred, 250,000 have been designated Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series B, or the series B preferred, and 100,000 have been designated Junior Serial Preferred Stock A, or the junior serial preferred stock. Our junior serial preferred stock was authorized in connection with our adoption of a rights agreement on July 28, 1998. These rights expired on June 30, 2005. As of March 1, 2010, 24,342,790 shares of common stock, 50,000 shares of series A preferred, 250,000 shares of series B preferred and no shares of junior serial preferred stock were issued and outstanding.

Common Stock

General. We may issue and offer shares of our common stock. All shares of Wintrust common stock are, and the shares of Wintrust common stock issuable upon conversion of the series A preferred will be, duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable. The rights, preferences and privileges of holders of Wintrust common stock are subject to, and may be adversely affected by, the rights of the holders of shares of any series of Wintrust preferred stock, including the series A preferred, series B preferred, junior serial preferred stock and any series of preferred

stock that Wintrust may designate and issue in the future. Shares of Wintrust common stock may be certificated or uncertificated, as provided by the Illinois Business Corporation Act, or the IBCA.

Voting Rights. Each holder of our common stock is entitled to one vote for each share held on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders and does not have cumulative voting rights. Accordingly, holders

of a majority of the shares of our common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors may elect all of our directors standing for election.

Dividend Rights. The holders of our common stock are entitled to receive dividends, if and when declared payable by our board of directors from any funds legally available for the payment of dividends, subject to any preferential dividend rights of outstanding Wintrust preferred stock, including the series A preferred and series B preferred. Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of our common stock are entitled to share pro rata in our net assets available after the payment of all debts and other liabilities and subject to the prior rights of any outstanding preferred stock, including the series A preferred and series B preferred.

Preemptive Rights. Under our amended and restated articles of incorporation, as amended, the holders of our common stock have no preemptive, subscription, redemption or conversion rights.

Listing. Our common shares are listed on The NASDAQ Global Select Stock Market. We intend to apply to The NASDAQ Global Select Market to list the additional common shares offered hereby.

Series A Preferred Stock

General. Shares of our series A preferred are not registered for sale pursuant to this prospectus.

Dividends. Non-Cumulative Dividends on the series A preferred are payable quarterly in arrears if, when and as declared by our Board of Directors, at a rate of 8.00% per year on the liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share. With certain limited exceptions, if we do not pay full cash dividends on the series A preferred for the most recently completed dividend period, we may not pay dividends on, or repurchase, redeem or make a liquidation payment with respect to, our common stock or other stock ranking equally with or junior to the series A preferred. The series A preferred is not redeemable by the holders thereof or us.

Conversion. Holders of the series A preferred may convert their shares into common stock at any time. We may convert all of the series A preferred into common stock upon the consummation of certain Fundamental Transactions (as defined in the Series A Certificate of Designations) consummated on or after August 26, 2010, provided that we have declared and paid in full dividends on the series A preferred for the four most recently completed quarterly dividend periods. On or after August 26, 2013, we may convert any or all of the series A preferred into common stock if, for 20 trading days during any period of 30 consecutive trading days, the closing price of our common stock exceeds \$35.59 and we have declared and paid in full dividends on the series A preferred for the four most recently completed quarterly dividend periods. The conversion price of the series A preferred is subject to customary anti-dilution adjustments. In addition, the conversion price will be adjusted if we sell more than \$10 million of common stock (or securities convertible into or exchangeable for common stock) prior to August 26, 2010 at a price per share that is less than an amount that is \$1.00 beneath the then applicable conversion price.

Reorganization Events and Fundamental Transactions. If we consummate a Reorganization Event (as defined in the Series A Certificate of Designations), each share of the series A preferred will, without the consent of the holders, become convertible into the kind of securities, cash and other property receivable in such Reorganization Event by a holder of the shares of common stock. If we consummate a Fundamental Transaction prior to August 26, 2010, holders of shares of series A preferred may convert such shares into the right to receive the consideration into which shares of common stock are exchanged or converted as a result of such Fundamental Transaction. The consideration to be received by the holders of series A preferred for each share of common stock into which the series A preferred is convertible must have a fair value of at least \$36.96 per share, which is equal to 135% of the initial conversion price, if such Fundamental Transaction is consummated prior to August 26, 2010, in each case as equitably adjusted for stock splits, stock combinations, stock dividends or similar transactions.

Voting Rights. Holders of the series A preferred generally do not have any voting rights, except as required by law. However, we may not amend our articles of incorporation or bylaws in a manner adverse to the rights of the series A preferred, issue capital stock ranking senior to the series A preferred or take certain other actions without the approval of the holders of the series A preferred. In addition, holders of the series A

preferred, together with the holders of other parity securities having similar voting rights, may elect two directors if we have not paid dividends on the series A preferred for four or more quarterly dividend periods, whether or not consecutive.

The series A preferred is not traded or quoted on any market.

Series B Preferred Stock

General. The shares of our series B preferred were originally issued by us pursuant to the Letter Agreement dated December 19, 2008, and the related Securities Purchase Agreement – Standard Terms, between us and the United States Department of the Treasury, or the US Treasury, together with a related warrant to purchase 1,643,295 shares of our common stock, in a transaction exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act of 1933. We have filed a registration statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-155637) covering the shares of series B preferred, the related warrant and the shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of such warrant.

Dividends. Holders of shares of series B preferred are entitled to receive if, as and when declared by our board of directors, out of legally available funds, cumulative cash dividends at a rate per annum of 5% per share on a liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share of series B preferred with respect to each dividend period from December 19, 2008 to, but excluding, December 20, 2013. From and after December 20, 2013, holders of shares of series B preferred are entitled to receive cumulative cash dividends at a rate per annum of 9% per share on a liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share of series B preferred with respect to each dividend period thereafter.

Dividends on the series B preferred are payable quarterly in arrears on each February 15, May 15, August 15 and November 15 (each, a dividend payment date), starting with February 15, 2009. If any dividend payment date is not a business day, then the next business day will be the applicable dividend payment date, and in that circumstance no additional dividends will accrue as a result of the applicable postponement of the dividend payment date. Dividends payable during any dividend period are computed on the basis of a 360-day year consisting of twelve 30-day months. Dividends payable with respect to the series B preferred are payable to holders of record of shares of series B preferred on the date that is 15 calendar days immediately preceding the applicable dividend payment date or such other record date as our board of directors or any duly authorized committee of the board determines, so long as such record date is not more than 60 nor less than 10 days prior to the applicable dividend payment date.

If we determine not to pay any dividend or a full dividend with respect to the series B preferred, we are required to provide written notice to the holders of shares of series B preferred prior to the applicable dividend payment date. Unpaid dividends on the series B preferred will be compounded.

We are subject to various regulatory policies and requirements relating to the payment of dividends, including requirements to maintain adequate capital above regulatory minimums. The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (the Federal Reserve Board) is authorized to determine, under certain circumstances relating to the financial condition of a bank holding company, such as us, that the payment of dividends would be an unsafe or unsound practice and to prohibit payment thereof.

Priority of Dividends. With respect to the payment of dividends and the amounts to be paid upon liquidation, the series B preferred will rank:

senior to our common stock and all other equity securities designated as ranking junior to the series B preferred; and

at least equally with all other equity securities designated as ranking on a parity with the series B preferred (parity stock), including our outstanding shares of series A preferred, with respect to the payment of dividends and distribution of assets upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding-up.

So long as any shares of series B preferred remain outstanding, unless all accrued and unpaid dividends for all prior dividend periods have been paid or are contemporaneously declared and paid in full, no dividend

whatsoever shall be paid or declared on our common stock or other junior stock, other than a dividend payable solely in shares of our common stock.

In addition, we may not purchase, redeem or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of our common stock or other junior stock unless we have paid in full all accrued dividends on the series B preferred for all prior dividend periods, other than:

purchases, redemptions or other acquisitions of our common stock or other junior stock in connection with the administration of our employee benefit plans in the ordinary course of business;

purchases or other acquisitions by broker-dealer subsidiaries of our company solely for the purpose of market-making, stabilization or customer facilitation transactions in junior stock or parity stock in the ordinary course of business;

purchases or other acquisitions by broker-dealer subsidiaries of our company for resale pursuant to an offering by us of our stock that is underwritten by the related broker-dealer subsidiary;

redemption or repurchases of rights pursuant to any stockholders' rights plan;

the acquisition by us of record ownership of junior stock or parity stock for the beneficial ownership of any other person (other than us), including as trustees or custodians; and

the exchange or conversion of (i) junior stock for or into other junior stock, or (ii) parity stock for or into other parity stock or junior stock, but only to the extent that (x) such acquisition is required pursuant to binding contractual agreements entered into before December 19, 2008, or (y) any subsequent agreement for the accelerated exercise, settlement or exchange thereof for common stock.

On any dividend payment date for which full dividends are not paid, or declared and funds set aside therefor, on the series B preferred and any other parity stock, all dividends paid or declared for payment on that dividend payment date (or, with respect to parity stock with a different dividend payment date, on the applicable dividend date therefor falling within the dividend period and related to the dividend payment date for the series B preferred), with respect to the series B preferred and any other parity stock shall be declared ratably among the holders of any such shares who have the right to receive dividends, in proportion to the respective amounts of the undeclared and unpaid dividends relating to the dividend period.

Subject to the foregoing, such dividends (payable in cash, stock or otherwise) as may be determined by our board of directors may be declared and paid on our common stock and any other stock ranking equally with or junior to the series B preferred from time to time out of any funds legally available for such payment, and the series B preferred shall not be entitled to participate in any such dividends.

Redemption. The series B preferred may not be redeemed prior to February 15, 2012 unless we have received aggregate gross proceeds from one or more qualified equity offerings (as described below) equal to \$62,500,000, which equals 25% of the aggregate liquidation amount of the series B preferred on the date of issuance. In such a case, we may redeem the series B preferred, in whole or in part, subject to the approval of the Federal Reserve Board, upon notice as described below, up to a maximum amount equal to the aggregate net cash proceeds received by us from such qualified equity offerings. A qualified equity offering is a sale and issuance for cash by us, to persons other than us or our subsidiaries after December 19, 2008, of shares of perpetual preferred stock, common stock or a combination thereof, that in each case qualify as Tier 1 capital at the time of issuance under the applicable risk-based capital guidelines of the Federal Reserve Board. Qualified equity offerings do not include issuances made in connection with

acquisitions, issuances of trust preferred securities and issuances of common stock and/or perpetual preferred stock made pursuant to agreements or arrangements entered into, or pursuant to financing plans that were publicly announced, on or prior to December 19, 2008.

On or after February 15, 2012, the series B preferred may be redeemed by us at any time, in whole or in part, subject to the approval of the Federal Reserve Board and the notice requirements described below.

In any redemption, the redemption price of the series B preferred shall be an amount equal to the per share liquidation amount plus accrued and unpaid dividends to but excluding the date of redemption.

The series B preferred will not be subject to any mandatory redemption, sinking fund or similar provisions. Holders of shares of series B preferred have no right to require the redemption or repurchase of their shares of series B preferred.

In the case of any redemption of less than all of the shares of series B preferred, the shares to be redeemed will be selected either pro rata or in such other manner as our board of directors may determine to be fair and equitable. Furthermore, if we repurchase shares of series B preferred from a holder other than the US Treasury, we must offer to repurchase a ratable portion of the shares of series B preferred then held by US Treasury.

We will mail notice of any redemption of the series B preferred by first class mail, postage prepaid, addressed to the holders of record of the shares of series B preferred to be redeemed at their respective last addresses appearing on our books. This mailing will be at least 30 days and not more than 60 days before the date fixed for redemption. Any notice mailed or otherwise given as described in this paragraph will be conclusively presumed to have been duly given, whether or not the holder receives the notice, and failure duly to give the notice by mail or otherwise, or any defect in the notice or in the mailing or provision of the notice, to any holder of series B preferred designated for redemption will not affect the redemption of any other shares of series B preferred. Each notice of redemption will set forth the applicable redemption date, the redemption price, the place where shares of series B preferred are to be redeemed, and the number of shares of series B preferred to be redeemed (and, if less than all shares of series B preferred held by the applicable holder, the number of shares to be redeemed from such holder).

Shares of series B preferred that are redeemed, repurchased or otherwise acquired by us will revert to authorized but unissued shares of our preferred stock.

Pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, or the ARRA, a financial institution that receives assistance under the United States Department of the Treasury's Troubled Asset Relief Program may repay such assistance without regard to the waiting period and source requirements described above, subject to the requirements that the recipient consult with the appropriate Federal banking agency and that it repay a minimum of 25% of the issue price of the preferred stock. The ARRA further provides that in the event a recipient repays such assistance, the Secretary of the Treasury will liquidate the warrants associated with such assistance at the current market price, which may include a repurchase of the warrants by the issuer. The shares of series B preferred and the warrant sold by Wintrust to the US Treasury are subject to these provisions of the ARRA.

Liquidation Rights. In the event that we voluntarily or involuntarily liquidate, dissolve or winds up our affairs, holders of series B preferred will be entitled to receive an amount per share, referred to as the total liquidation amount, equal to the fixed liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share, plus any accrued and unpaid dividends, whether or not declared, to the date of payment. Holders of series B preferred will be entitled to receive the total liquidation amount out of our assets that are available for distribution to stockholders, after payment or provision for payment of our debts and other liabilities but before any distribution of assets is made to holders of our common stock or any other shares ranking, as to that distribution, junior to the series B preferred.

If our assets are not sufficient to pay the total liquidation amount in full to all holders of series B preferred and all holders of any shares of outstanding parity stock, the amounts paid to the holders of series B preferred and other shares of parity stock will be paid pro rata in accordance with the respective total liquidation amount for those holders. If the total liquidation amount per share of series B preferred has been paid in full to all holders of series B preferred and other shares of parity stock, the holders of our common stock or any other shares ranking, as to such distribution, junior to series B preferred will be entitled to receive all of our remaining assets according to their respective rights and preferences.

For purposes of the liquidation rights, neither the sale, conveyance, exchange or transfer of all or substantially all of our property and assets, nor the consolidation or merger by us with or into, any other corporation or by another

corporation with or into us, will constitute a liquidation, dissolution or winding-up of our affairs.

Voting Rights. Except as indicated below or otherwise required by law, holders of series B preferred will not have any voting rights.

If dividends on the series B preferred have not been paid for an aggregate of six quarterly dividend periods or more (whether or not consecutive), the authorized number of directors then constituting our board of directors will be automatically increased by two. Holders of series B preferred, together with the holders of any outstanding parity stock with like voting rights (the Voting Parity Stock), voting as a single class, will be entitled to elect the two additional members to our board of directors (the Preferred Stock Directors), at the next annual meeting (or at a special meeting called for the purpose of electing the Preferred Stock Directors prior to the next annual meeting) and at each subsequent annual meeting until all accrued and unpaid dividends on the series B preferred for all past dividend periods have been paid in full. The election of any Preferred Stock Director is subject to the qualification that his or her election would not cause us to violate the corporate governance requirement of The NASDAQ Global Select Market (or any other exchange on which our securities may be listed) that listed companies must have a majority of independent directors.

Upon the termination of the right of the holders of series B preferred and Voting Parity Stock to elect Preferred Stock Directors, as described above, the Preferred Stock Directors will immediately cease to be qualified as directors, their term of office shall terminate immediately and the number of authorized directors on our board will be reduced by the number of Preferred Stock Directors that the holders of series B preferred and Voting Parity Stock had been entitled to elect. The holders of a majority of shares of series B preferred and Voting Parity Stock, voting as a class, may remove any Preferred Stock Director, with or without cause, and the holders of a majority of the shares of series B preferred and Voting Parity Stock, voting as a class, may fill any vacancy created by the removal of a Preferred Stock Director. If the office of a Preferred Stock Director becomes vacant for any other reason, the remaining Preferred Stock Director may choose a successor to fill such vacancy for the remainder of his or her unexpired term.

So long as any shares of series B preferred are outstanding, in addition to any other vote or consent of stockholders required by law or by our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, as amended, the vote or consent of the holders of at least 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the shares of series B preferred at the time outstanding, voting separately as a single class, given in person or by proxy, either in writing without a meeting or by vote at any meeting called for the purpose, shall be necessary for effecting or validating:

any amendment or alteration of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, as amended to authorize or create or increase the authorized amount of, or any issuance of, any shares of, or any securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for shares of, any class or series of capital stock ranking senior to the series B preferred with respect to payment of dividends and/or distribution of assets on our liquidation, dissolution or winding up;

any amendment, alteration or repeal of any provision of the Series B Certificate of Designations so as to adversely affect the rights, preferences, privileges or voting powers of series B preferred; or

any consummation of a binding share exchange or reclassification involving the series B preferred or a merger or consolidation of us with another entity, unless the shares of series B preferred remain outstanding following any such transaction or, if we are not the surviving entity, are converted into or exchanged for preference securities and such remaining outstanding shares of series B preferred or preference securities have rights, references, privileges and voting powers that are not materially less favorable than the rights, preferences, privileges or voting powers of the series B preferred, taken as a whole.

The foregoing voting provisions will not apply if, at or prior to the time when the vote or consent would otherwise be required, all outstanding shares of series B preferred have been redeemed or called for redemption upon proper notice

and sufficient funds have been set aside by us for the benefit of the holders of series B preferred to effect the redemption.

Preferred Stock

General. We may offer shares of any series of preferred stock that we may designate and issue in the future. Under our amended and restated articles of incorporation, as amended, our board of directors has the authority to issue preferred stock in one or more series, and to fix for each series the voting powers and the distinctive designations, preferences and relative, participation, optional or other special rights and such qualifications, limitations or restrictions, as may be stated and expressed in the resolution or resolutions adopted by the board of directors providing for the issuance of such series as may be permitted by the IBCA, including dividend rates, conversion rights, terms of redemption and liquidation preferences and the number of shares constituting each such series, without any further vote or action by our shareholders.

Preferred Stock Offered Hereby. If we offer preferred stock pursuant to this prospectus in the future, the applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of such preferred shares, including the following, where applicable:

the designation of the shares and the number of shares that constitute the series;

the dividend rate (or the method of calculating dividends), if any, on the shares of the series and the priority as to payment of dividends with respect to other classes or series of our shares of capital stock;

whether dividends will be cumulative or non-cumulative and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends on the preferred shares will accumulate;

the dividend periods (or the method of calculating the dividend periods);

the voting rights of the preferred shares, if any;

the liquidation preference and the priority as to payment of the liquidation preference with respect to other classes or series of our capital stock and any other rights of the shares of the class or series upon our liquidation or winding-up;

whether or not the shares of the series will be convertible and, if so, the security into which they are convertible and the terms and conditions of conversion, including the conversion price or the manner of determining it;

whether or not and on what terms the shares of the series will be subject to redemption or repurchase at our option;

whether the preferred shares of the series will be listed on a national securities exchange or quoted on an automated quotation system;

federal income tax considerations; and

the other material terms, rights and privileges and any qualifications, limitations or restrictions of the rights or privileges of the series.

The description in the prospectus supplement will not necessarily be complete and reference will be made to the certificate of designation relating to a series of preferred shares which will be filed with the SEC.

Depositary Shares

We may elect to offer fractional preferred shares rather than full preferred shares. If so, we will issue depositary receipts for these depositary shares. Each depositary share will represent a fraction of a share of a particular series of preferred shares. If we offer depositary shares pursuant to these projections in the future, the applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the depositary shares and the underlying preferred shares to which the depositary shares relate.

The description in the prospectus supplement will not necessarily be complete, and reference will be made to the deposit agreement relating to the depositary shares which will be filed with the SEC.

Exchange Agent and Registrar

Illinois Stock Transfer Company is the exchange agent and registrar for our common stock. Unless the applicable prospectus supplement specifies otherwise, the exchange agent and registrar for each series of preferred stock will be Illinois Stock Transfer Company.

Certain Provisions That May Have an Anti-Takeover Effect

Certain provisions of Wintrust's articles of incorporation, by-laws and the IBCA may have the effect of impeding the acquisition of control of Wintrust by means of a tender offer, a proxy fight, open-market purchases or otherwise in a transaction not approved by Wintrust's board of directors.

These provisions may have the effect of discouraging a future takeover attempt which is not approved by Wintrust's board of directors but which individual Wintrust shareholders may deem to be in their best interests or in which Wintrust shareholders may receive a substantial premium for their shares over then-current market prices. As a result, shareholders who might desire to participate in such a transaction may not have an opportunity to do so. Such provisions will also render the removal of Wintrust's current board of directors or management more difficult.

These provisions of Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws include the following:

our board of directors may issue additional authorized shares of our capital stock to deter future attempts to gain control of Wintrust, including the authority to determine the terms of any one or more series of preferred stock, such as voting rights, conversion rates, and liquidation preferences. As a result of the ability to fix voting rights for a series of preferred stock, the board has the power, to the extent consistent with its fiduciary duty, to issue a series of preferred stock to persons friendly to management in order to attempt to block a merger or other transaction by which a third party seeks control, and thereby assist the incumbent board of directors and management to retain their respective positions;

our articles of incorporation do not provide for cumulative voting for any purpose, and our articles of incorporation and by-laws also provide that any action required or permitted to be taken by shareholders may be taken only at an annual or special meeting and prohibit shareholder action by written consent in lieu of a meeting;

our articles of incorporation expressly elect to be governed by the provisions of Section 7.85 of the IBCA. Section 7.85 prohibits a publicly held Illinois corporation from engaging in a business combination unless, in addition to any affirmative vote required by law or the articles of incorporation of the company, the proposed business combination:

receives the affirmative vote of the holders of at least 80% of the combined voting power of the then outstanding shares of all classes and series of the corporation entitled to vote generally in the election of directors voting together as a single class (the voting shares), and the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting shares held by disinterested shareholders;

is approved by at least two-thirds of the disinterested directors; or

provides for consideration offered to shareholders that meets certain fair price standards and satisfies certain procedural requirements.

Such fair price standards require that the fair market value per share of the consideration offered be equal to or greater than the higher of:

the highest per share price paid by the interested shareholder during the two-year period immediately prior to the first public announcement of the proposed business combination or in the transaction by which the interested shareholder became an interested shareholder; and

the fair market value per common share on the first trading date after the first public announcement of the proposed business combination or on the first trading date after the date of the first public announcement that the interested shareholder has become an interested shareholder.

For purposes of Section 7.85, disinterested director means any member of the board of directors of the corporation who:

is neither the interested shareholder nor an affiliate or associate of the interested shareholder;

was a member of the board of directors prior to the time that the interested shareholder became an interested shareholder or was a director of the corporation before January 1, 1997, or was recommended to succeed a disinterested director by a majority of the disinterested directors then in office; and

was not nominated for election as a director by the interested shareholder or any affiliate or associate of the interested shareholder.

the amendment of our articles of incorporation must be approved by a majority vote of the board of directors and also by a two-thirds vote of the outstanding shares of our common stock, provided, however, that an affirmative vote of at least 85% of the outstanding voting stock entitled to vote is required to amend or repeal certain provisions of the articles of incorporation, including provisions (a) prohibiting cumulative voting rights, (b) relating to certain business combinations, (c) limiting the shareholders' ability to act by written consent, (d) regarding the minimum number of directors, (e) indemnification of directors and officers by Wintrust and limitation of liability for directors, and (f) regarding amendment of the foregoing supermajority provisions of our articles of incorporation. Wintrust's by-laws may be amended only by the board of directors.

The provisions described above are intended to reduce our vulnerability to takeover attempts and certain other transactions which have not been negotiated with and approved by members of our board of directors.

Additionally, the Change in Bank Control Act of 1978 prohibits a person or group of persons from acquiring control of a bank holding company unless:

the Federal Reserve has been given 60 days' prior written notice of such proposed acquisition; and

within that time period the Federal Reserve has not issued a notice disapproving the proposed acquisition or extending for up to another 30 days the period during which such a disapproval may be issued.

An acquisition may be made prior to the expiration of the disapproval period if the Federal Reserve issues written notice of its intent not to disapprove the action. Under a rebuttable presumption established by the Federal Reserve, the acquisition of more than 10% of a class of voting stock of a bank holding company with a class of securities registered under Section 12 of the Exchange Act, such as Wintrust, would, under the circumstances set forth in the presumption, constitute the acquisition of control. The receipt of revocable proxies, provided the proxies terminate within a reasonable time after the meeting to which they relate, is not included in determining percentages for change in control purposes.

DESCRIPTION OF STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND STOCK PURCHASE UNITS

We may issue stock purchase contracts, including contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and us to sell to the holders, a specified number of common shares at a future date or dates, which we refer to in this Prospectus as Stock Purchase Contracts. The price per common share and number of common shares may be fixed at the time the Stock Purchase Contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula set forth in the Stock Purchase Contracts. The Stock Purchase Contracts may be issued separately or as a part of units consisting of a Stock Purchase Contract and our debt securities or debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. Treasury securities,

securing the holders' obligations to purchase the common shares under the Stock Purchase Contracts, which we refer to in this Prospectus as Stock Purchase Units. The Stock Purchase Contracts may require holders to secure their obligations thereunder in a specified manner. The Stock Purchase Contracts also may require us to make periodic payments to the holders of the Stock Purchase Units or vice-versa and such payments may be unsecured or prefunded on some basis.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any Stock Purchase Contracts or Stock Purchase Units. The description in the prospectus supplement will not necessarily be complete, and reference will be made to the Stock Purchase Contracts, and, if applicable, collateral or depositary arrangements, relating to the Stock Purchase Contracts or Stock Purchase Units. Material United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the Stock Purchase Units and the Stock Purchase Contracts will also be discussed in the applicable prospectus supplement.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may issue warrants to purchase debt securities, common shares, or preferred shares. We may issue warrants independently or together with other securities. Warrants sold with other securities may be attached to or separate from the other securities. We will issue warrants under one or more warrant agreements between us and a warrant agent that we will name in the prospectus supplement.

The prospectus supplement relating to any warrants we are offering will include specific terms relating to the offering. These terms will include some or all of the following:

the title of the warrants;

the aggregate number of warrants offered;

the designation, number and terms of the debt securities, common shares or preferred shares purchasable upon exercise of the warrants and procedures by which those numbers may be adjusted;

the exercise price of the warrants;

the dates or periods during which the warrants are exercisable;

the designation and terms of any securities with which the warrants are issued;

if the warrants are issued as a unit with another security, the date on and after which the warrants and the other security will be separately transferable;

if the exercise price is not payable in U.S. dollars, the foreign currency, currency unit or composite currency in which the exercise price is denominated;

any minimum or maximum amount of warrants that may be exercised at any one time;

any terms relating to the modification of the warrants; and

any terms, procedures and limitations relating to the transferability, exchange or exercise of the warrants.

The description in the prospectus supplement will not necessarily be complete, and reference will be made to the warrant agreements which will be filed with the SEC.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRUST

Wintrust Capital Trust VI is a Delaware statutory trust formed pursuant to the Delaware Statutory Trust Act under a trust agreement executed by us, as sponsor for the trust, and the trustees, and a certificate of trust has been filed with the Delaware Secretary of State. The trust agreement will be amended and restated in its entirety in the form filed as

an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, as of the date the trust preferred securities are initially issued. The trust agreement will be qualified under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939.

The following discussion contains a description of the material terms of the trust agreement for the trust and is subject to, and is qualified in its entirety by reference to, the amended and restated trust agreement.

The holders of the trust preferred securities issued pursuant to an offering described in this prospectus and subsequent prospectus supplements will own all of the issued and outstanding trust preferred securities of

the trust which have certain prior rights over the other securities of the trust in certain circumstances as specified in this prospectus. We will not initially own any of the trust preferred securities. We will initially own, directly or indirectly, all of the issued and outstanding common securities. The common securities, together with the trust preferred securities, are called the trust securities.

The trust exists exclusively for the purposes of:

issuing the trust preferred securities to the public for cash;

issuing its common securities to us in exchange for our capitalization of the trust;

investing the proceeds from the sale of the trust securities in an equivalent amount of debentures; and

engaging in other activities that are incidental to those listed above, such as receiving payments on the debentures and making distributions to security holders, furnishing notices and other administrative tasks.

The trust will not have any independent business operations or any assets, revenues or cash flows other than those related to the issuance and administration of the trust securities.

The rights of the holders of the trust securities are as set forth in the trust agreement, the Delaware Statutory Trust Act and the Trust Indenture Act. The trust agreement does not permit the trust to borrow money or make any investment other than in the debentures. Other than with respect to payment of distributions on and the liquidation amount of the trust securities, Wintrust has agreed to pay for all debts and obligations and all costs and expenses of the trust, including the fees and expenses of the trustees and any income taxes, duties and other governmental charges, and all costs and expenses related to these charges, to which the trust may become subject, except for United States withholding taxes that are properly withheld.

The number of trustees of the trust will initially be five. Three of the trustees will be persons who are employees or officers of or who are affiliated with Wintrust. They are the administrative trustees. The fourth trustee will be an entity that maintains its principal place of business in the State of Delaware. It is the Delaware trustee. Initially, Wilmington Trust Company, a Delaware banking corporation, will act as Delaware trustee. The fifth trustee, called the property trustee, will also initially be Wilmington Trust Company. The property trustee is the institutional trustee under the trust agreement and acts as the indenture trustee called for under the applicable provisions of the Trust Indenture Act. Also for purposes of compliance with the Trust Indenture Act, Wilmington Trust Company will act as guarantee trustee and indenture trustee under the guarantee agreement and the indenture. We, as holder of all of the common securities, will have the right to appoint or remove any trustee unless an event of default under the indenture has occurred and is continuing, in which case only the holders of the trust preferred securities may remove the Delaware trustee or the property trustee. The trust has a term of approximately 31 years but may terminate earlier as provided in the trust agreement.

The property trustee will hold the debentures for the benefit of the holders of the trust securities and will have the power to exercise all rights, powers and privileges under the indenture as the holder of the debentures. In addition, the property trustee will maintain exclusive control of a segregated noninterest-bearing payment account established with Wilmington Trust Company to hold all payments made on the debentures for the benefit of the holders of the trust securities. The property trustee will make payments of distributions and payments on liquidation, redemption and otherwise to the holders of the trust securities out of funds from the payment account. The guarantee trustee will hold the guarantee for the benefit of the holders of the trust preferred securities. We will pay all fees and expenses related to the trust and the offering of the trust preferred securities, including the fees and expenses of the trustees.

DESCRIPTION OF TRUST PREFERRED SECURITIES

The trust will issue only one series of trust preferred securities and one series of common securities. The trust agreement for the trust will be qualified as an indenture under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939. The trust preferred securities will have terms and will be subject to conditions as set forth in the trust agreement or made a part of the trust agreement by the Trust Indenture Act. This summary of certain provisions of the trust preferred securities and each trust agreement does not purport to be complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, all the provisions of each trust agreement, including the definitions of certain terms, and those provisions made part of each trust agreement by the Trust Indenture Act. A form of the trust agreement to be used in connection with the issuance of the trust preferred securities and a form of the trust preferred securities are filed as exhibits to the registration statement that includes this prospectus. Wherever particular defined terms of a trust agreement are referred to in this prospectus, those defined terms are incorporated in this prospectus by reference. A copy of the form of the trust agreement is available upon request from the property trustee.

General

The trust agreement authorizes the administrative trustees, on behalf of the trust, to issue the trust securities, which are comprised of the trust preferred securities to be sold to the public and the common securities. We will own all of the common securities issued by the trust. The trust is not permitted to issue any securities other than the trust securities or incur any other indebtedness.

The trust preferred securities will represent preferred undivided beneficial interests in the assets of the trust, and the holders of the trust preferred securities will be entitled to a preference over the common securities upon an event of default with respect to distributions and amounts payable on redemption or liquidation. The trust preferred securities will rank equally, and payments on the trust preferred securities will be made proportionally, with the common securities, except as described under Subordination of Common Securities.

The property trustee will hold legal title to the debentures in trust for the benefit of the holders of the trust securities. We will guarantee the payment of distributions out of money held by the trust, and payments upon redemption of the trust preferred securities or liquidation of the trust, to the extent described under Description of the Guarantee. The guarantee agreement does not cover the payment of any distribution or the liquidation amount when the trust does not have sufficient funds available to make these payments.

The specific terms of the trust preferred securities offered by the trust will be described in a prospectus supplement, including:

- the specific designation, liquidation amount, number to be issued by the trust and purchase price;
- the currency or units based on or relating to currencies in which distributions and other payments will or may be payable;
- the distribution rates (or the method by which the rates will be determined), if any;
- the dates on which any distributions will be payable;
- any provisions relating to deferral of distribution payments;

the places where distributions and other amounts payable on the trust preferred securities will be payable;

any repayment, redemption, prepayment or sinking fund provisions;

any conversion or exchange provisions;

the voting rights, if any, of holders of the capital securities;

the terms and conditions, if any, upon which the assets of the trust may be distributed to holders of the trust preferred securities;

any applicable United States federal income tax consequences; and

any other specific terms of the trust preferred securities.

If indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, the terms of the trust agreement for, and capital securities offered by, the trust may differ from the terms summarized in this prospectus.

Distributions

Source of Distributions. The funds of the trust available for distribution to holders of the trust preferred securities will be limited to payments made under the debentures, which the trust will purchase with the proceeds from the sale of the trust securities.

Distributions will be paid through the property trustee, which will hold the amounts received from our interest payments on the debentures in the payment account for the benefit of the holders of the trust securities. If we do not make interest payments on the debentures, the property trustee will not have funds available to pay distributions on the trust preferred securities.

Distributions will accumulate from the date of issuance, will be cumulative and will be computed on the basis of a 360-day year of twelve 30-day months. If the distribution date is not a business day, then payment of the distributions will be made on the next day that is a business day, without any additional interest or other payment for the delay. However, if the next business day is in the next calendar year, payment of the distribution will be made on the business day immediately preceding the scheduled distribution date.

Extension Period. As long as no event of default under the indenture has occurred and is continuing, we have the right to defer the payment of interest on the debentures at any time for a period not exceeding 20 consecutive quarters. We refer to this period of deferral as an extension period. No extension period may extend beyond the maturity date or end on a date other than an interest payment date, which dates are the same as the distribution dates. If we defer the payment of interest, quarterly distributions on the trust preferred securities will also be deferred during any such extension period. Any deferred distributions under the trust preferred securities will accumulate additional amounts at an annual rate compounded quarterly from the relevant distribution date. The term distributions as used in this prospectus includes those accumulated amounts.

During an extension period, we may not:

declare or pay any dividends or distributions on, or redeem, purchase, acquire or make a liquidation payment with respect to, any of our capital stock (other than stock dividends, non-cash dividends in connection with the implementation of a shareholder rights plan, purchases of common stock in connection with employee benefit plans or in connection with the reclassification of any class of our capital stock into another class of capital stock);