

CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP

Form S-3ASR

January 02, 2009

Table of Contents

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 2, 2009

Registration No. 333-_____

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

FORM S-3
REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

Delaware
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)
777 North Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90012

95-4274680
(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

(213) 625-4700

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

Perry P. Oei, Esq.

Senior Vice President and General Counsel

Cathay General Bancorp

Edgar Filing: CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP - Form S-3ASR

777 North Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90012

(213) 625-4700

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

Copy to:

Craig D. Miller, Esq.

Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP

One Embarcadero Center

San Francisco, California 94111

(415) 291-7415

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, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

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

If 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 definitions of large accelerated filer, accelerated filer and smaller reporting company in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer

Accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer

Smaller reporting company

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of each class of securities to be registered	Amount to be Registered	Proposed maximum offering price per unit	Proposed Maximum	
			Aggregate Offering Price	Amount of Registration Fee

Edgar Filing: CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP - Form S-3ASR

Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series B, \$0.01 par value per share	258,000	\$1,000(1)	\$258,000,000(1)	\$10,139.40
Warrant to Purchase Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share, and underlying shares of Common Stock(2)	1,846,374(2)	\$20.96(3)	\$38,700,000(3)	\$1,520.91
Total:			\$296,700,000	\$11,660.31

- (1) Calculated in accordance with Rule 457(a) and includes such additional number of shares of Series B Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock of a currently indeterminable amount, as may from time to time become issuable by reason of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions.
- (2) In addition to the Series B Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, there are being registered hereunder (a) a warrant for the purchase of 1,846,374 shares of common stock with an initial per share exercise price of \$20.96 per share, (b) the 1,846,374 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of such warrant and (c) such additional number of shares of common stock, of a currently indeterminable amount, as may from time to time become issuable by reason of stock splits, stock dividends and certain anti-dilution provisions set forth in such warrant, which shares of common stock are registered hereunder pursuant to Rule 416. Each share of common stock includes one attached Series A preferred share purchase right per share.
- (3) Calculated in accordance with Rule 457(i) with respect to the per share exercise price of the warrant of \$20.96.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

FIXED RATE CUMULATIVE PERPETUAL PREFERRED STOCK, SERIES B

WARRANT TO PURCHASE SHARES OF COMMON STOCK

1,846,374 SHARES OF COMMON STOCK

This prospectus relates to the potential resale from time to time by selling securityholders of some or all of the shares of our Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series B, or the Series B Preferred Stock, a warrant to purchase 1,846,374 shares of common stock, or the warrant, and any shares of common stock issuable from time to time upon exercise of the warrant. In this prospectus, we refer to the shares of Series B Preferred Stock, the warrant and the shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant, collectively, as the securities. The Series B Preferred Stock and the warrant were originally issued by us pursuant to the Letter Agreement dated December 5, 2008, and the Securities Purchase Agreement Standard Terms attached thereto, between us and the United States Department of the Treasury, which we refer to as the initial selling securityholder, in a transaction exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act.

The initial selling securityholder and its successors, including transferees, which we collectively refer to as the selling securityholders, may offer the securities from time to time directly or through underwriters, broker-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 these securities are sold through underwriters, broker-dealers or agents, the selling securityholders will be responsible for underwriting discounts or commissions or agents commissions.

We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of securities by the selling securityholders.

The Series B Preferred Stock is not listed on an exchange, and, unless requested by the initial selling securityholder, we do not intend to list the Series B Preferred Stock on any exchange. Our common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CATY. On December 30, 2008, the closing price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market was \$22.70 per share. You are urged to obtain current market quotations of the common stock.

Our principal executive offices are located at 777 North Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90012, and our telephone number is (213) 625-4700.

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should consider carefully the risks and uncertainties in the section entitled Risk Factors beginning on page 4 of this prospectus and in the documents we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission before investing in our securities.

These securities are our unsecured obligations and are not savings accounts, deposits, or other obligations of any bank or non-bank subsidiary of ours and are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency.

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.

The date of this prospectus is January 2, 2009.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<u>ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS</u>	1
<u>WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION</u>	1
<u>INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE</u>	2
<u>FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS</u>	3
<u>RISK FACTORS</u>	4
<u>CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP</u>	4
<u>USE OF PROCEEDS</u>	5
<u>RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED DIVIDENDS</u>	5
<u>DESCRIPTION OF SERIES B PREFERRED STOCK</u>	6
<u>DESCRIPTION OF WARRANT TO PURCHASE COMMON STOCK</u>	10
<u>DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK</u>	12
<u>ANTI-TAKEOVER PROVISIONS IN CATHAY S CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS</u>	12
<u>PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION</u>	14
<u>SELLING SECURITYHOLDERS</u>	15
<u>LEGAL MATTERS</u>	16
<u>EXPERTS</u>	16

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, the selling securityholders may, from time to time, offer and sell, in one or more offerings, the securities described in this prospectus.

We may provide a prospectus supplement containing specific information about the terms of a particular offering by the selling securityholders. The prospectus supplement may add, update or change information in this prospectus. If the information in this prospectus is inconsistent with a prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in that prospectus supplement. You should read both this prospectus and, if applicable, any prospectus supplement. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#) for more information.

In this prospectus, Cathay, we, our, ours, and us refer to Cathay General Bancorp, which is a bank holding company headquartered in Los Angeles, California, and its subsidiaries on a consolidated basis, unless the context otherwise requires. References to Cathay Bank or the Bank means Cathay Bank, a California state-chartered bank, which is our bank subsidiary.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly, and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available to the public over the Internet at the SEC's web site at www.sec.gov and on the investor relations page of our website at www.cathaygeneralbancorp.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.

Table of Contents

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to other documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus, and information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information. In all cases, you should rely on the later information over different information included in this prospectus.

We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and all future filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act, prior to the termination of the offering, except to the extent that any information contained in such filings is deemed furnished in accordance with SEC rules:

Our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2007, filed with the SEC on February 29, 2008, including portions incorporated by reference therein to our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, filed with the SEC on March 21, 2008;

Our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the fiscal quarter ended March 31, 2008 filed on May 8, 2008, for the fiscal quarter ended June 30, 2008 filed on August 11, 2008, and for the fiscal quarter ended on September 30, 2008 filed on November 10, 2008;

Our Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on December 5, 2008;

The description of our common stock contained in the Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed September 16, 1999, including any amendment or report filed to update such description; and

The description of our preferred share purchase rights contained in the Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed December 20, 2000, including any amendment or report filed to update such description.

These documents contain important information about us and our financial condition. Information contained in this prospectus supersedes information incorporated by reference that we have filed with the SEC prior to the date of this prospectus, while information that we file with the SEC after the date of this prospectus that is incorporated by reference will automatically update and supersede this information.

Our filings are available on our website, www.cathaygeneralbancorp.com. Information contained in or linked to our website is not a part of this prospectus. You may also request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at:

Cathay General Bancorp

777 North Broadway

Los Angeles, California 90012

(213) 625-4700

Table of Contents

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents incorporated herein by reference include forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Exchange Act. We intend such forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements in these provisions. All statements other than statements of historical fact are forward-looking statements for purposes of federal and state securities laws, including statements about anticipated future operating and financial performance, financial position and liquidity, growth opportunities and growth rates, growth plans, acquisition and divestiture opportunities, business prospects, strategic alternatives, business strategies, financial expectations, regulatory and competitive outlook, investment and expenditure plans, financing needs and availability and other similar forecasts and statements of expectation and statements of assumptions underlying any of the foregoing. Words such as aims, anticipates, believes, could, estimates, expects, hopes, intends, may, plans, projects, seek, potential, continue, and variations of these words and similar expressions are intended to identify these forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from our historical experience and our present expectations or projections. Such risks and uncertainties and other factors include, but are not limited to adverse developments or conditions related to or arising from:

significant volatility and deterioration in the credit and financial markets;

reduced demand for our products and services;

the impact of any goodwill impairment that may be determined;

deterioration in asset or credit quality;

acquisitions of other banks, if any;

fluctuations in interest rates;

expansion into new market areas;

earthquake, wildfire or other natural disasters;

competitive pressures;

legislative and regulatory developments; and

general economic or business conditions in California and other regions where the Bank has operations, including, but not limited to, adverse changes in economic conditions resulting from a prolonged economic downturn.

Forward-looking statements by us are based on estimates, projections, beliefs and assumptions of management and are not guarantees of future performance. Such forward-looking statements may be contained in this prospectus (and the documents incorporated by reference herein) under Risk Factors, or may be contained in our Annual Report on Form 10-K or in our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q under headings such as Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Conditions and Results of Operations and Business, or in our Current Reports on Form 8-K,

Edgar Filing: CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP - Form S-3ASR

among other places. Any investor in Cathay should consider all risks and uncertainties disclosed in our filings with the SEC described above under the heading "Where You Can Find More Information," all of which are accessible on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

These and other factors are further described in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2007, (at Item 1A in particular) its other reports and registration statements filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") (including, but not limited to Item 1A in our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q) and other filings it makes in the future with the SEC from time to time. Actual results in any future period may also vary from the past results discussed in this report. Given these risks and uncertainties, we caution readers not to place undue reliance on any forward-looking statements, which speak to the date of this report. We have no intention and undertake no obligation to update any forward-looking statement or to publicly announce the results of any revision of any forward-looking statement to reflect future developments or events, except as required by law.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

An investment in our securities involves a high degree of risk. Before making an investment decision, you should read carefully and consider the risk factors incorporated by reference in this prospectus, as well as those contained in any applicable prospectus supplement, as the same may be updated from time to time by our future filings with the SEC under the Exchange Act. You should also refer to other information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, including our financial statements and the related notes incorporated by reference herein. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us at this time or that we currently deem immaterial may also materially and adversely affect our business and operations.

CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP

Cathay General Bancorp is a corporation that was organized in 1990 under the laws of the State of Delaware. We are the holding company of Cathay Bank, a California state-chartered commercial bank.

The Bank's head office is located in the Chinatown area of Los Angeles, at 777 North Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90012. In addition, as of September 30, 2008, the Bank had branch offices in Southern California (21 branches), Northern California (10 branches), New York (nine branches), Massachusetts (one branch), Texas (two branches), Washington (three branches), Illinois (three branches), New Jersey (one branch), Hong Kong (one branch) and a representative office in Shanghai and in Taipei. Current activities of the Shanghai and Taipei representative offices are limited to coordinating the transportation of documents to the Bank's head office and performing liaison services.

As a commercial bank, Cathay Bank accepts checking, savings, and time deposits, and makes commercial, real estate, personal, home improvement, automobile, and other installment and term loans. From time to time, the Bank invests available funds in other interest-earning assets, such as U.S. Treasury securities, U.S. government agency securities, state and municipal securities, mortgage-backed securities, asset-backed securities, corporate bonds, and other security investments. The Bank also provides letters of credit, wire transfers, forward currency spot and forward contracts, traveler's checks, safe deposit, night deposit, Social Security payment deposit, collection, bank-by-mail, drive-up and walk-up windows, automatic teller machines (ATM), Internet banking services, and other customary bank services.

The Bank primarily services individuals, professionals, and small to medium-sized businesses in the local markets in which its branches are located and provides commercial mortgage loans, commercial loans, Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, residential mortgage loans, real estate construction loans, equity lines of credit; and installment loans to individuals for automobile, household, and other consumer expenditures.

Through Cathay Wealth Management, Cathay Bank provides its customers the ability to trade stocks online and to purchase mutual funds, annuities, equities, bonds, and short-term money market instruments, through PrimeVest Financial Services. These products are not insured by the FDIC.

Table of Contents**USE OF PROCEEDS**

We will not receive any proceeds from any sale of the securities by the selling securityholders. We will receive proceeds upon exercise of the warrant in an amount of up to approximately \$38.7 million if the Warrant is exercised in full under its current terms for cash. We will use the proceeds received from the exercise of warrant, if any, for working capital and general corporate purposes.

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED DIVIDENDS

The following table shows our ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends on a consolidated basis. During the periods shown below, no shares of our Series B Preferred Stock were outstanding. Preferred stock dividends were paid, however, by the real estate investment trust subsidiaries of the Bank and are reflected in the table below.

For purposes of determining the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends, earnings are defined as the sum of pre-tax income (loss) from continuing operations, fixed charges and amortization of capitalized interest; less interest capitalized, preference security dividend requirements of consolidated subsidiaries and minority interest in pre-tax income of subsidiaries that have not incurred fixed charges. Fixed charges means the sum of interest expensed and capitalized, amortized premiums, discounts and capitalized expenses related to indebtedness and an estimate of the interest within rental expense and preference security dividend requirements of consolidated subsidiaries.

CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP AND SUBSIDIARIES**Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends**

(Dollars in thousands)	For the nine months ended September 30,		2007	For the Years Ended December 31,			
	2008	2007		2006	2005	2004	2003
Income before income tax expense	\$ 83,554	\$ 148,945	\$ 196,660	\$ 184,829	\$ 166,481	\$ 140,422	\$ 87,822
Plus fixed charges	226,584	224,077	309,114	214,664	112,432	62,142	41,152
Earnings	310,138	373,022	505,774	399,493	278,913	202,564	128,974
Fixed charges	226,584	224,077	309,114	214,664	112,432	62,142	41,152
Preferred Dividends	452	452	610	610	611	593	15
Fixed Charges and Preferred Dividends	\$ 227,036	\$ 224,529	\$ 309,724	\$ 215,274	\$ 113,043	\$ 62,735	\$ 41,167
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges	1.37	1.66	1.64	1.86	2.48	3.26	3.13
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges and preferred dividends	1.37	1.66	1.63	1.86	2.47	3.23	3.13

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES B PREFERRED STOCK

The following is a brief description of the terms of the Series B Preferred Stock that may be resold by the selling securityholders. This summary does not purport to be complete in all respects. This description is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to our restated certificate of incorporation, as amended, including the certificate of designations of preferences with respect to the Series B Preferred Stock, copies of which have been filed with the SEC and are also available upon request from us.

General

Under our restated certificate of incorporation, as amended, we have authority to issue up to 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock, \$.01 par value per share. Of such number of shares of preferred stock, 100,000 shares have been designated as Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock, and 258,000 shares have been designated as Series B Preferred Stock, all of which shares of Series B Preferred Stock were issued to the initial selling securityholder in a transaction exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act. The issued and outstanding shares of Series B Preferred Stock are validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable.

Dividends Payable On Shares of Series B Preferred Stock

Holders of shares of Series B Preferred Stock are entitled to receive if, as and when declared by our board of directors or a duly authorized committee of the board, out of assets legally available for payment, 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 Stock with respect to each dividend period during the five year period following December 5, 2008 and 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 Stock with respect to each dividend period thereafter.

Dividends 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 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 Stock are payable to holders of record of shares of Series B Preferred Stock on the date that is 15 calendar days immediately preceding the applicable dividend payment date or such other record date as the 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 Stock, we are required to provide written notice to the holders of shares of Series B Preferred Stock prior to the applicable dividend payment date.

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 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. In addition, we and the Bank are subject to California state laws relating to the payment of dividends, including limitations imposed on the ability of the Bank to pay dividends to us by the California Financial Code.

Priority of Dividends

With respect to the payment of dividends and the amounts to be paid upon liquidation, the Series B Preferred Stock will rank:

Senior to our common stock and all other equity securities designated as ranking junior to the Series B Preferred Stock; and

Table of Contents

at least equally with all other equity securities designated as ranking on a parity with the Series B Preferred Stock, or parity stock, with respect to the payment of dividends and distribution of assets upon any liquidation, dissolution or winding-up of Cathay. Until the earlier of December 5, 2011 or the date on which the initial selling securityholder has transferred all of the Series B Preferred Stock to unaffiliated third parties or such stock is redeemed in full, we may not, without the initial selling securityholder's consent, increase the cash dividend on our common stock nor, subject to exceptions, repurchase any of our common stock or other capital stock or other equity securities, or any trust preferred securities. The initial selling securityholder's consent is not required for payment of dividends solely in the form of shares of our common stock.

So long as any shares of Series B Preferred Stock 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 common stock. We and our subsidiaries also 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 Stock 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 pursuant to a publicly announced repurchase plan up to the increase in diluted shares outstanding resulting from the grant, vesting or exercise of equity-based compensation;

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

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

any redemption of rights or junior stock in connection with any shareholders' rights plan or repurchases of rights pursuant to any shareholders' rights plan;

acquisition of record ownership of junior stock or parity stock for the beneficial ownership of any other person who is not Cathay or a subsidiary of Cathay, including as trustee or custodian; and

the exchange or conversion of junior stock for or into other junior stock or of parity stock for or into other parity stock or junior stock but only to the extent that such acquisition is required pursuant to binding contractual agreements entered into before December 5, 2008 or any subsequent agreement for the accelerated exercise, settlement or exchange thereof for common stock.

If we repurchase shares of Series B Preferred Stock from a holder other than the initial selling securityholder, we must offer to repurchase a ratable portion of the Series B Preferred Stock then held by the initial selling securityholder.

On any dividend payment date for which full dividends are not paid, or declared and funds set aside, on the Series B Preferred Stock 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 falling within the dividend period and related to the dividend payment date for the Series B Preferred Stock), with respect to the Series B Preferred Stock 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 (or a duly authorized committee of the board) may be declared and paid on our common stock and any other stock ranking equally with or junior to the Series B Preferred Stock from time to time out of any funds legally available for such payment, and the Series B Preferred Stock shall not be entitled to participate in any such dividend.

Table of Contents

Redemption

The Series B Preferred Stock 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 \$64,500,000, which equals 25% of the aggregate liquidation amount of the Series B Preferred Stock on the date of issuance. In such a case, we may redeem the Series B Preferred Stock, subject to the approval of the Federal Reserve Board, in whole or in part, 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 Cathay or its subsidiaries after December 5, 2008, of shares of perpetual preferred stock, common stock or a combination thereof, that in each case qualify as Tier 1 capital of Cathay 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 October 13, 2008.

After February 15, 2012, the Series B Preferred Stock may be redeemed in whole or in part, at any time, subject to the approval of the Federal Reserve Board and the notice as described below.

Our certificate of incorporation limits our ability to repurchase any shares of our capital stock at a purchase price greater than such capital's stock fair market value from any person who is the beneficial owner of more than 5% of our outstanding common stock, or was an affiliate or associate of ours within the previous two years.

In any redemption, the redemption price is 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 Stock will not be subject to any mandatory redemption, sinking fund or similar provisions. Holders of shares of Series B Preferred Stock have no right to require the redemption or repurchase of the Series B Preferred Stock.

If fewer than all of the outstanding shares of Series B Preferred Stock are to be redeemed, the shares to be redeemed will be selected either pro rata from the holders of record of shares of Series B Preferred Stock in proportion to the number of shares held by those holders or in such other manner as our board of directors or a committee thereof may determine to be fair and equitable.

We will mail notice of any redemption of Series B Preferred Stock by first class mail, postage prepaid, addressed to the holders of record of the shares of Series B Preferred Stock 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 any failure to duly 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 Stock designated for redemption will not affect the redemption of any other Series B Preferred Stock. Each notice of redemption will set forth the applicable redemption date, the redemption price, the place where shares of Series B Preferred Stock are to be redeemed, and the number of shares of Series B Preferred Stock to be redeemed (and, if less than all shares of Series B Preferred Stock held by the applicable holder, the number of shares to be redeemed from the holder).

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

Liquidation Rights

In the event that we voluntarily or involuntarily liquidate, dissolve or wind-up our affairs, holders of Series B Preferred Stock 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 the Series B

Table of Contents

Preferred Stock will be entitled to receive the total liquidation amount out of our assets that are available for distribution to shareholders, 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 Stock.

If our assets are not sufficient to pay the total liquidation amount in full to all holders of Series B Preferred Stock and all holders of any shares of outstanding parity stock, the amounts paid to the holders of Series B Preferred Stock 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 Stock has been paid in full to all holders of Series B Preferred Stock and other shares of parity stock, the holders of our common stock or any other shares ranking, as to such distribution, junior to the Series B Preferred Stock 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, the holders of Series B Preferred Stock will not have any voting rights.

Election of Two Directors upon Non-Payment of Dividends. If the dividends on the Series B Preferred Stock have not been paid for an aggregate of six quarterly dividend periods or more (whether or not consecutive), the holders of Series B Preferred Stock, together with the holders of any outstanding parity stock with like voting rights, referred to as voting parity stock, voting as a single class, will be entitled to elect the two members of our board of directors, referred to as 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 for all past dividend periods have been paid in full. The election of any preferred stock director is subject to the qualification that the 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 Stock and voting parity stock to vote for 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 of Cathay will be reduced by the number of preferred stock directors that the holders of Series B Preferred Stock and voting parity stock had been entitled to elect. The holders of a majority of shares of Series B Preferred Stock 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 Stock 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 the unexpired term.

Other Voting Rights. So long as any shares of Series B Preferred Stock are outstanding, in addition to any other vote or written consent of shareholders required by law or by our articles of incorporation, the vote or written consent of the holders of at least 66 2/3% of the shares of Series B Preferred Stock 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 such purpose, shall be necessary for effecting or validating:

any amendment or alteration of the certificate of designations for the Series B Preferred Stock or our certificate of incorporation 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 Stock with respect to payment of dividends and/or distribution of assets on any liquidation, dissolution or winding-up of Cathay;

Table of Contents

any amendment, alteration or repeal of any provision of the certificate of designations for the Series B Preferred Stock so as to adversely affect the rights, preferences, privileges or voting powers of the Series B Preferred Stock; or

any consummation of a binding share exchange or reclassification involving the Series B Preferred Stock or of a merger or consolidation of Cathay with another entity, unless the shares of Series B Preferred Stock remain outstanding following any such transaction or, if Cathay is not the surviving entity, are converted into or exchanged for preference securities and such remaining outstanding shares of Series B Preferred Stock 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 Stock, taken as a whole.

To the extent of the voting rights of the Series B Preferred Stock, each holder of Series B Preferred Stock will be entitled to one vote for each share of Series B Preferred Stock held.

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 Stock 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 Stock to effect the redemption.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANT TO PURCHASE COMMON STOCK

The following is a brief description of the terms of the warrant that may be resold by the selling securityholders. This summary does not purport to be complete in all respects. This description is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to, the warrant, a copy of which has been filed with the SEC and is also available upon request from us.

Shares of Common Stock Subject to the Warrant

The warrant is initially exercisable for 1,846,374 shares of our common stock. If we complete one or more qualified equity offerings on or prior to December 31, 2009 that result in our receipt of aggregate gross proceeds of not less than \$258,000,000, which is equal to 100% of the aggregate liquidation preference of the Series B Preferred Stock, the number of shares of common stock underlying the warrant then held by the initial selling securityholder will be reduced by one-half of the original number of shares. The number of shares subject to the warrant are subject to the further adjustments described below under the heading *Adjustments to the Warrant*.

Exercise of the Warrant

The initial exercise price applicable to the warrant is \$20.96 per share of common stock for which the warrant may be exercised. The warrant may be exercised at any time on or before December 5, 2018 by surrender of the warrant and a completed notice of exercise attached as an annex to the warrant and the payment of the exercise price for the shares of common stock for which the warrant is being exercised. The exercise price may be paid either by the withholding by Cathay of such number of shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant equal to the value of the aggregate exercise price of the warrant determined by reference to the market price of our common stock on the trading day on which the warrant is exercised or, if agreed to by us and the warrant holder, by the payment of cash equal to the aggregate exercise price. The exercise price applicable to the warrant is subject to the further adjustments described below under the heading *Adjustments to the Warrant*. The initial selling securityholder may not exercise the warrant with respect to more than one-half of the original number of shares of common stock until the earlier of the date on which Cathay has received aggregate gross proceeds from a qualified equity offering of at least \$258,000,000 and December 31, 2009.

Upon exercise of the warrant, certificates for the shares of common stock issuable upon exercise will be issued to the warrant holder. We will not issue fractional shares upon any exercise of the warrant. Instead, the warrant holder will be entitled to a cash payment equal to the market price of our common stock on the last day preceding the exercise of the warrant (less the pro-rated exercise price of the warrant) for any fractional shares that would have otherwise been issuable upon exercise of the warrant. We will at all times reserve the aggregate number of shares of our common stock for which the warrant may be exercised. The shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant are listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market.

Table of Contents

Rights as a Shareholder

The warrant holder shall have no rights or privileges of the holders of our common stock, including any voting rights, until (and then only to the extent) the warrant has been exercised. The initial selling securityholder has agreed not to exercise any voting rights with respect to shares of our common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant.

Transferability

The initial selling securityholder may not transfer a portion of the warrant with respect to more than one-half of the original number of shares of common stock until the earlier of the date on which Cathay has received aggregate gross proceeds from a qualified equity offering of at least \$258,000,000 and December 31, 2009. The warrant, and all rights under the warrant, are otherwise transferable.

Adjustments to the Warrant

Adjustments in Connection with Stock Splits, Subdivisions, Reclassifications and Combinations. The number of shares for which the warrant may be exercised and the exercise price applicable to the warrant will be proportionately adjusted in the event we pay dividends or make distributions of our common stock, subdivide, combine or reclassify outstanding shares of our common stock.

Anti-dilution Adjustment. Until the earlier of December 5, 2011 and the date the initial selling securityholder no longer holds the warrant (and other than in certain permitted transactions described below), if we issue any shares of common stock (or securities convertible or exercisable into common stock) for less than 90% of the market price of the common stock on the last trading day prior to pricing such shares, then the number of shares of common stock into which the warrant is exercisable and the exercise price will be adjusted. Permitted transactions include issuances:

as consideration for or to fund the acquisition of businesses and/or related assets;

in connection with employee benefit plans and compensation related arrangements in the ordinary course and consistent with past practice approved by our board of directors;

in connection with public or broadly marketed offerings and sales of common stock or convertible securities for cash conducted by us or our affiliates pursuant to registration under the Securities Act, or Rule 144A thereunder on a basis consistent with capital-raising transactions by comparable financial institutions (but do not include other private transactions); and

in connection with the exercise of preemptive rights on terms existing as of December 5, 2008.

Other Distributions. If we declare any dividends or distributions other than our historical ordinary cash dividends, the exercise price of the warrant will be adjusted to reflect such distribution.

Certain Repurchases. If we effect a pro rata repurchase of common stock, both the number of shares issuable upon exercise of the warrant and the exercise price will be adjusted.

Business Combinations. In the event of a merger, consolidation or similar transaction involving Cathay and requiring shareholder approval, the warrant holder's right to receive shares of our common stock upon exercise of the warrant shall be converted into the right to exercise the warrant for the consideration that would have been payable to the warrant holder with respect to the shares of common stock for which the warrant may be exercised, as if the warrant had been exercised prior to such merger, consolidation or similar transaction.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

The following is a brief description of the terms of our Common Stock that may be resold by the selling securityholders. This summary does not purport to be complete in all respects. This description is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to our restated certificate of incorporation, as amended, and Bylaws, copies of which have been filed with the SEC and are also available upon request from us, as well as the description of our common stock which is incorporated by reference herein through our previous filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

General

We have 100,000,000 shares of authorized common stock, \$.01 par value per share, of which 49,507,918 shares were outstanding as of December 15, 2008.

Holders of our common stock are entitled to receive dividends if, as and when declared by our board of directors, out of any funds legally available for dividends. Holders of our common stock are also entitled, upon our liquidation, and after claims of creditors and the preferences of Series B Preferred Stock, and any other class or series of preferred stock outstanding at the time of liquidation, to receive pro rata our net assets. We pay dividends on our common stock only if we have paid or provided for all dividends on our outstanding series of preferred stock, for the then current period and, in the case of any cumulative preferred stock, all prior periods.

Our Series B Preferred Stock has, and any other series of preferred stock upon issuance will have, preference over our common stock with respect to the payment of dividends and the distribution of assets in the event of our liquidation or dissolution. Our preferred stock also has such other preferences as currently, or as may be, fixed by our board of directors.

Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share that they hold and are vested with all of the voting power except as our board of directors has provided, or may provide in the future, with respect to preferred stock or any other class or series of preferred stock that the board of directors may hereafter authorize. Shares of our common stock are not redeemable, and have no subscription, conversion or preemptive rights.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market. Outstanding shares of our common stock are validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable. Holders of our common stock are not, and will not be, subject to any liability as shareholders.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company.

ANTI-TAKEOVER PROVISIONS IN CATHAY S CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS

The following includes a brief description of certain of the provisions of Cathay s restated certificate of incorporation and restated bylaws. This description is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to our restated certificate of incorporation, as amended, and restated bylaws, as amended, copies of which have been filed with the SEC and are also available upon request from us.

General

Our restated certificate of incorporation and restated bylaws contain certain provisions that deal with matters of corporate governance and certain rights of stockholders which might be deemed to have a potential anti-takeover effect. These provisions may have the effect of discouraging a future takeover attempt which is not approved by the board of directors but which individual stockholders may deem to be in their best interest, or in which stockholders may receive a substantial premium for their shares over then current market prices. As a result, stockholders 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 an incumbent board of directors or management more difficult.

Table of Contents

Preferred Stock Purchase Rights

On November 16, 2000, our board of directors adopted a Rights Agreement between us and American Stock Transfer and Trust Company, as Rights Agent, and declared a dividend of one preferred share purchase right for each outstanding share of our common stock. Each preferred share purchase right entitles the registered holder to purchase from Cathay one one-thousandth of a share of Cathay Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock at a price of \$200, subject to adjustment. In general, the rights become exercisable if a person or group acquires 15% or more of our common stock or announces a tender offer for 15% or more of the common stock. Our board of directors is entitled to redeem the rights at one cent per right at any time before any such person acquires 15% or more of the outstanding common stock. The rights will expire on November 16, 2010.

In addition, our restated certificate of incorporation has other provisions that could make more difficult the acquisition of Cathay by means of a tender offer, a proxy contest, merger or otherwise. These provisions include: (i) a staggered board, whereby only one-third of the members of the board of directors are elected in any particular year; (ii) a requirement that any Business Combination (as defined in the restated certificate of incorporation) be approved by the affirmative vote of not less than 80% of the voting power of the then outstanding shares unless it is either approved by the board of directors or certain price and procedural requirements are satisfied and (iii) the ability of the board of directors to issue preferred stock at such time and on such terms and conditions as it deems appropriate.

Directors

Certain provisions of our restated certificate of incorporation and restated bylaws will impede changes in majority control of the board of directors. Our restated certificate of incorporation and/or restated bylaws provide that: our board is divided into three classes so that approximately one-third of the total number of directors is elected each year. This classified board of directors is intended to provide for continuity of the board of directors and to make it more difficult and time consuming for a stockholder group to use its voting power to gain control of the board of directors without consent of the incumbent board of directors; any vacancy occurring in the board of directors, including a vacancy created by an increase in the number of directors, is filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by a majority vote of the directors then in office; a director, in general, may be removed from office at any time only for cause and only by the affirmative vote of eighty (80%) percent of the then-outstanding shares of capital stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors, voting together as a single class; stockholders may vote their shares cumulatively for directors in the event there is a holder of forty (40%) or more of our outstanding capital stock entitled to vote; prohibition on taking action by shareholder written consent or for shareholders to call for a special meeting; and procedures for the nomination of directors and submission of matters to the vote of our stockholders.

Delaware Anti-Takeover Statute

We are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, which prohibits a publicly held Delaware corporation from engaging in a business combination with an interested stockholder for a period of three years after the date of the transaction in which the person becomes an interested stockholder, unless:

before that date, the board of directors of the corporation approves either the business combination or the transaction that resulted in the stockholder's becoming an interested stockholder;

upon consummation of the transaction that resulted in the stockholder's becoming an interested stockholder, the interested stockholder owns at least 85% of the outstanding voting stock, excluding shares held by directors, officers and employee stock plans; or

on or after the consummation date, the business combination is approved by the board of directors and by the affirmative vote at an annual or special meeting of stockholders of at least 66-2/3% of the outstanding voting stock that is not owned by the interested stockholder.

For purposes of Section 203, a business combination includes a merger, asset sale or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to the interested stockholder. An interested stockholder is generally a person who, together with affiliates and associates of that person, (a) owns 15% or more of the corporation's voting stock or (b) is an affiliate or associate of the corporation and was the owner of 15% or more of the outstanding voting stock of the corporation at any time within the prior three years.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

The selling securityholders and their successors, including their transferees, may sell the securities directly to purchasers or through underwriters, broker-dealers or agents, who may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the selling securityholders or the purchasers of the securities. These discounts, concessions or commissions as to any particular underwriter, broker-dealer or agent may be in excess of those customary in the types of transactions involved.

The securities may be sold in one or more transactions at fixed prices, at prevailing market prices at the time of sale, at varying prices determined at the time of sale or at negotiated prices. These sales may be effected in transactions, which may involve crosses or block transactions:

on any national securities exchange or quotation service on which the preferred stock or the common stock may be listed or quoted at the time of sale, including, as of the date of this prospectus, the NASDAQ Global Select Market in the case of the common stock;

in the over-the-counter market;

in transactions otherwise than on these exchanges or services or in the over-the-counter market; or

through the writing of options, whether the options are listed on an options exchange or otherwise.

In addition, any securities that qualify for sale pursuant to Rule 144 or Rule 144A under the Securities Act may be sold under such rules rather than pursuant to this prospectus.

In connection with the sale of the securities or otherwise, the selling securityholders may enter into hedging transactions with broker-dealers, which may in turn engage in short sales of the common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant in the course of hedging the positions they assume. The selling securityholders may also sell short the common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant and deliver common stock to close out short positions, or loan or pledge the Series B Preferred Stock or the common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant to broker-dealers that in turn may sell these securities.

The aggregate proceeds to the selling securityholders from the sale of the securities will be the purchase price of the securities less discounts and commissions, if any.

In effecting sales, broker-dealers or agents engaged by the selling securityholders may arrange for other broker-dealers to participate. Broker-dealers or agents may receive commissions, discounts or concessions from the selling securityholders in amounts to be negotiated immediately prior to the sale.

In offering the securities covered by this prospectus, the selling securityholders and any broker-dealers who execute sales for the selling securityholders may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of Section 2(a)(11) of the Securities Act in connection with such sales. Any profits realized by the selling securityholders and the compensation of any broker-dealer may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions. Selling securityholders who are underwriters within the meaning of Section 2(a)(11) of the Securities Act will be subject to the prospectus delivery requirements of the Securities Act and may be subject to certain statutory and regulatory liabilities, including liabilities imposed pursuant to Sections 11, 12 and 17 of the Securities Act and Rule 10b-5 under the Exchange Act.

In order to comply with the securities laws of certain states, if applicable, the securities must be sold in such jurisdictions only through registered or licensed brokers or dealers. In addition, in certain states the securities may not be sold unless they have been registered or qualified for sale in the applicable state or an exemption from the registration or qualification requirement is available and is complied with.

The anti-manipulation rules of Regulation M under the Exchange Act may apply to sales of securities pursuant to this prospectus and to the activities of the selling securityholders. In addition, we will make copies of this prospectus available to the selling securityholders for the purpose of satisfying the prospectus delivery requirements of the Securities Act.

Table of Contents

At the time a particular offer of securities is made, if required, a prospectus supplement will set forth the number and type of securities being offered and the terms of the offering, including the name of any underwriter, dealer or agent, the purchase price paid by any underwriter, any discount, commission and other item constituting compensation, any discount, commission or concession allowed or reallocated or paid to any dealer, and the proposed selling price to the public.

We do not intend to apply for listing of the Series B Preferred Stock or the warrant on any securities exchange or for inclusion in any automated quotation system unless requested by the initial selling shareholder. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity of the trading market, if any, for the Series B Preferred Stock or the warrant.

We have agreed to indemnify the selling securityholders against certain liabilities, including certain liabilities under the Securities Act. We have also agreed, among other things, to bear substantially all expenses (other than underwriting discounts and selling commissions) in connection with the registration and sale of the securities covered by this prospectus.

SELLING SECURITYHOLDERS

On December 5, 2008, we issued the securities covered by this prospectus to the United States Department of Treasury, which is the initial selling securityholder under this prospectus, in a transaction exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act. The initial selling securityholder, or its successors, including transferees, may from time to time offer and sell, pursuant to this prospectus or a supplement to this prospectus, any or all of the securities they own. The securities to be offered under this prospectus for the account of the selling securityholders are:

258,000 shares of Series B Preferred Stock, representing beneficial ownership of 100% of the shares of Series B Preferred Stock outstanding on the date of this prospectus;

a warrant to purchase 1,846,374 shares of our common stock, which if exercised, would represent beneficial ownership of approximately 3.73% of our common stock as of December 15, 2008; and

1,846,374 shares of our common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant, which shares, if issued, would represent ownership of approximately 3.73% of our common stock as of December 15, 2008.

For purposes of this prospectus, we have assumed that, after completion of the offering, none of the securities covered by this prospectus will be held by the selling securityholders.

Beneficial ownership is determined in accordance with the rules of the SEC and includes voting or investment power with respect to the securities. To our knowledge, the initial selling securityholder has sole voting and investment power with respect to the securities.

We do not know when or in what amounts the selling securityholders may offer the securities for sale. The selling securityholders might not sell any or all of the securities offered by this prospectus. Because the selling securityholders may offer all or some of the securities pursuant to this offering, and because currently no sale of any of the securities is subject to any agreements, arrangements or understandings, we cannot estimate the number of the securities that will be held by the selling securityholders after completion of the offering.

Other than with respect to the acquisition of the securities, the initial selling securityholder has not had a material relationship with us.

Information about the selling securityholders may change over time and changed information will be set forth in supplements to this prospectus if and when necessary.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the Series B Preferred Stock, the warrant and the common stock offered by this prospectus will be passed upon for us by Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, San Francisco, California.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of Cathay General Bancorp and subsidiaries as of December 31, 2007 and 2006, and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2007, and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2007, have been incorporated by reference herein and in the registration statement in reliance upon the reports of KPMG LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, incorporated by reference herein, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

Table of Contents**PART II****INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS****Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution.**

The following table sets forth the various expenses to be incurred in connection with the sale and distribution of the securities being registered hereby, all of which will be borne by us (except any underwriting discounts and commissions and expenses incurred by the selling securityholders for brokerage, accounting, tax or legal services or any other expenses incurred by the selling securityholders in disposing of the shares). All amounts shown are estimates except the SEC registration fee.

SEC registration fee	\$ 11,660.31
Legal fees and expenses	\$ 20,000.00
Accounting fees and expenses	\$ 20,000.00
Miscellaneous expenses	\$ 2,500.00
Total Expenses	\$ 54,160.31

Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers.

Pursuant to Section 102(b)(7) of the Delaware General Corporation Law (the "DGCL"), our Restated Certificate of Incorporation contains a provision that eliminates the personal liability of its directors to the registrant and its stockholders for monetary damages resulting from breaches of their fiduciary duty as directors, other than liability for breaches of the duty of loyalty, acts, or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, violations under Section 174 of the DGCL or any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

Section 145 of the DGCL permits, and under certain circumstances requires, registrant to indemnify its directors, officers, employees, and agents subject to certain conditions and limitations. We have entered into indemnification agreements with each of our directors and officers. Our Bylaws also contain provisions to indemnify its agents, including its directors and officers. In addition, the registrant maintains directors' and officers' liability insurance which insures against certain liabilities that its officers and directors may incur in such capacities and has entered into indemnity agreements with such officers and directors.

Item 16. Exhibits.

EXHIBIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
3.1	Restated Certificate of Incorporation (1)
3.2	Certificate of Amendment of Restated Certificate of Incorporation (2)
3.3	Restated Bylaws (3)
3.4	Amendment to the Restated Bylaws (4)
3.5	Amendment to the Restated Bylaws (5)
3.6	Certificate of Designation of Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock (6)

Table of Contents

3.7	Certificate of Designations of Series B Preferred Stock (7)
4.1	Warrant to Purchase Common Stock (8)
4.2	Form of Certificate for the Series B Preferred Stock (9)
4.3	Rights Agreement with American Stock Transfer and Trust Company, dated November 16, 2000. (10)
5.1	Opinion of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP *
10.1	Letter Agreement, dated as of December 5, 2008, including the Securities Purchase Agreement – Standard Terms incorporated by reference therein, between Cathay General Bancorp and the United States Department of the Treasury (11)
12.1	Statement of ratio of earnings to fixed charges and preferred dividends *
23.1	Consent of KPMG LLP *
23.2	Consent of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP (included in Exhibit 5.1 filed herewith)
24.1	Powers of Attorney (included in the signature pages to the Registration Statement)

* Filed herewith.

- (1) Filed as Exhibit 3.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (2) Filed as Exhibit 3.1.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (3) Filed as Exhibit 3.2 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (4) Filed as Exhibit 3.2.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (5) Previously filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 18, 2007, as an exhibit to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.
- (6) Filed as Exhibit 3.3 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2006 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (7) Filed as Exhibit 3.1 and 4.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.
- (8) Filed as Exhibit 4.2 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.
- (9) Filed as Exhibit 4.3 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.

- (10) Filed as Exhibit 1 to the Registrant's Form 8-A filed on December 20, 2000 and incorporated hereby by reference.
- (11) Filed as Exhibit 10.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.

Item 17. Undertakings.

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

- (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:
 - (i) to include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act of 1933);

Table of Contents

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

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

provided, however, that paragraphs (1)(i), (1)(ii) and (1)(iii) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act), that are incorporated by reference in this registration statement, or is contained in a form of prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) that is part of this registration statement.

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

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

(4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser:

(i) each prospectus filed by a registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and

(ii) each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5), or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii) or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by Section 10(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier of the date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which that prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof. Provided, however, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date.

(5) That, for the purpose of determining liability of a registrant under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities:

The undersigned registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications the undersigned registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

(i) any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of the undersigned registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;

Table of Contents

(ii) any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned registrant;

(iii) the portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of the undersigned Registrant; and

(iv) any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned registrant to the purchaser.

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

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

Table of Contents**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, the Registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the City of Los Angeles, State of California, on December 31, 2008.

CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP

By: /s/ Dunson K. Cheng
Dunson K. Cheng
Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer

Power of Attorney and Signatures

Each person whose signature appears below appoints Dunson K. Cheng and Heng W. Chen, and each of them acting individually, as his or her true and lawful attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full power of substitution and resubstitution, for him or her and in his or her name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to this Registration Statement and any registration statement (including any amendment thereto) of the Registrant to be filed after the date hereof pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto, and all other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorneys-in-fact and agents full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite and necessary to be done, as fully to all intents and purposes as he or she might or would do in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that said attorneys-in fact and agents or any of them or their or his or her substitute and substitutes, may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this Registration Statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

Signature	Title	Date
/s/ Dunson K. Cheng	President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman of the Board	December 31, 2008
Dunson K. Cheng	(Principal Executive Officer)	
/s/ Heng W. Chen	Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Treasurer	December 31, 2008
Heng W. Chen	(Principal Financial and Accounting Officer)	
/s/ Peter Wu	Director	December 31, 2008
Peter Wu		
/s/ Anthony M. Tang	Director	December 31, 2008
Anthony M. Tang		
/s/ Kelly L. Chan	Director	December 31, 2008
Kelly L. Chan		
/s/ Michael M.Y. Chang	Director	December 31, 2008

Michael M.Y. Chang

S-1

Table of Contents

/s/ Thomas C.T. Chiu	Director	December 31, 2008
Thomas C.T. Chiu		
/s/ Nelson Chung	Director	December 31, 2008
Nelson Chung		
/s/ Patrick S.D. Lee	Director	December 31, 2008
Patrick S.D. Lee		
/s/ Ting Liu	Director	December 31, 2008
Ting Liu		
	Director	
Joseph C.H. Poon		
/s/ Thomas G. Tartaglia	Director	December 31, 2008
Thomas G. Tartaglia		

Table of Contents

EXHIBIT INDEX

EXHIBIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
3.1	Restated Certificate of Incorporation (1)
3.2	Certificate of Amendment of Restated Certificate of Incorporation (2)
3.3	Restated Bylaws (3)
3.4	Amendment to the Restated Bylaws (4)
3.5	Amendment to the Restated Bylaws (5)
3.6	Certificate of Designation of Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock (6)
3.7	Certificate of Designations of Series B Preferred Stock (7)
4.1	Warrant to Purchase Common Stock (8)
4.2	Form of Certificate for the Series B Preferred Stock (9)
4.3	Rights Agreement with American Stock Transfer and Trust Company, dated November 16, 2000. (10)
5.1	Opinion of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP *
10.1	Letter Agreement, dated as of December 5, 2008, including the Securities Purchase Agreement – Standard Terms incorporated by reference therein, between Cathay General Bancorp and the United States Department of the Treasury (11)
12.1	Statement of ratio of earnings to fixed charges and preferred dividends *
23.1	Consent of KPMG LLP *
23.2	Consent of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP (included in Exhibit 5.1 filed herewith)
24.1	Powers of Attorney (included in the signature pages to the Registration Statement)

* Filed herewith.

- (1) Filed as Exhibit 3.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (2) Filed as Exhibit 3.1.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (3) Filed as Exhibit 3.2 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (4) Filed as Exhibit 3.2.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (5) Previously filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 18, 2007, as an exhibit to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.

Edgar Filing: CATHAY GENERAL BANCORP - Form S-3ASR

- (6) Filed as Exhibit 3.3 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2006 and incorporated herein by reference.
- (7) Filed as Exhibit 3.1 and 4.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.
- (8) Filed as Exhibit 4.2 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.
- (9) Filed as Exhibit 4.3 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.
- (10) Filed as Exhibit 1 to the Registrant's Form 8-A filed on December 20, 2000 and incorporated hereby by reference.
- (11) Filed as Exhibit 10.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 5, 2008 and incorporated hereby by reference.