

NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP
Form S-3
May 02, 2005
Table of Contents

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 29, 2005

Registration No. 333-

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, DC 20549

FORM S-3

REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER

THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Its Charter)

Maryland
(State or Other Jurisdiction of
Incorporation or Organization)

56-2451736
(I.R.S. Employer

Identification No.)

18400 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 1000

Irvine, California 92612

(949) 440-7030

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

Brad A. Morrice

President and Chief Operating Officer

New Century Financial Corporation

18400 Von Karman, Suite 1000

Irvine, California 92612

(949) 440-7030

Copies to:

Peter T. Healy, Esq.

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

O Melveny & Myers LLP

275 Battery Street, 26th Floor

San Francisco, California 94111

(415) 984-8700

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

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public:

From time to time after the effective date of this registration statement.

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

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

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

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

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

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities To Be Registered	Amount To Be	Proposed Maximum	Proposed Maximum	Amount Of
	Registered (1)	Offering Price Per Share (2)	Aggregate Offering Price	Registration Fee
Common Stock, par value \$0.01 per share	636,885 shares	\$ 43.00	\$ 27,386,055	\$ 3,223.34

(1) Pursuant to Rule 416 of the Securities Act, includes such additional number of shares of the registrant's common stock that may become issuable as a result of any stock splits, stock dividends or similar events.

(2) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rule 457(c) under the Securities Act, based on the market value of the registrant's common stock being registered, as established by the average of the high and low prices for the registrant's common stock as reported on the New York Stock Exchange on April 22, 2005, which was \$43.00.

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

Table of Contents

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED APRIL 29, 2005

PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS

636,885 Shares

Common Stock

This prospectus relates to the sale of up to 636,885 shares of our common stock by the selling stockholder named in this prospectus. The selling stockholder acquired the shares of our common stock offered by this prospectus in a private placement that closed on October 6, 2004 concurrently with the public offering of our common stock. The prices at which the selling stockholder may sell the shares will be determined by the prevailing market price for the shares of our common stock or in negotiated transactions. We will not receive any portion of the proceeds from the sale of the shares of our common stock. Our common stock is subject to transfer restrictions designed to preserve our status as a real estate investment trust, or REIT.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, or NYSE, under the symbol **NEW**. The last reported bid price of our common stock as reported on the NYSE on April 28, 2005 was \$45.20 per share.

Investing in our common stock involves risks. See Risk Factors beginning on page 2.

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

The date of this prospectus is April , 2005.

Table of Contents

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>SUMMARY</u>	1
<u>THE OFFERING</u>	1
<u>RISK FACTORS</u>	2
<u>SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS</u>	23
<u>USE OF PROCEEDS</u>	25
<u>MATERIAL U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS</u>	26
<u>SELLING STOCKHOLDER</u>	47
<u>PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION</u>	48
<u>LEGAL MATTERS</u>	52
<u>EXPERTS</u>	52
<u>WHERE YOU CAN FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT NEW CENTURY</u>	52
<u>INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE</u>	53

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

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus constitutes part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission through what is known as the shelf registration process. Under this process, the selling stockholder may sell the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities the selling stockholder may offer. A prospectus

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with additional information described under the heading [Where You Can Find Additional Information about New Century](#).

Table of Contents

SUMMARY

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

NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Our Business

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

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

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

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

Distribution for First Quarter 2005

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

On February 2, 2005, our board of directors declared a cash dividend of \$1.55 per share, which we will pay on April 29, 2005 to our stockholders of record on April 15, 2005.

THE OFFERING

Common stock offered by the selling stockholder	636,885 shares
---	----------------

Use of proceeds	We will not receive any portion of the proceeds from the sale of shares of our common stock in this offering.
-----------------	---

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

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

RISKS RELATED TO OUR BUSINESS

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

obtain a third-party loan for some portion of the required financing amount and then replicate the third-party loan terms in the intercompany borrowing. However, if we are unable to maintain adequate financing or other sources

Table of Contents

of capital are not available, we would be forced to suspend or curtail our operations, which would harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects. Similarly, we may be required to pursue one or more alternative strategies, such as selling assets, refinancing or restructuring our indebtedness or selling additional debt or equity securities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

conditions of our prepayment penalties in several other states. This places us at a competitive disadvantage relative to financial

Table of Contents

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

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

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

Our failure to comply with these laws can lead to:

civil and criminal liability;

loss of licensure;

damage to our reputation in the industry;

inability to sell or securitize our loans;

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

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

administrative enforcement actions.

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

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

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

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

In March 2004, an Illinois Court of Appeals found that the Illinois Interest Act, which caps fees at 3% for loans with an interest rate in excess of 8%, is not preempted by federal law. This ruling contradicts the view of the Federal

Table of Contents

Circuit Courts of Appeal, most state courts, the OTS and the Illinois Office of the Attorney General. In November 2004, the Illinois Supreme Court decided to consider an appeal to this case. If this ruling is not overturned, we may reduce operations in Illinois since it will reduce the return we and our investors can expect on higher risk loans. Moreover, as a result of this ruling, plaintiffs are filing actions against lenders, including us, seeking various forms of relief as a result of any fees received in the past that exceeded the applicable thresholds. Any such actions, if decided against us, could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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

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

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

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

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

We are not currently regulated as an investment company under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, or the Investment Company Act, and we intend to operate so as to not become regulated as an investment company under the Investment Company Act. For example, we intend to qualify for an exemption under the Investment Company Act that is available to companies that are primarily engaged in the business of purchasing or otherwise acquiring mortgages and other liens on and interests in real estate. Specifically, we intend to invest at least 55% of our assets in mortgage loans or mortgage-related assets securities that represent the entire ownership in a pool of mortgage loans and at least an additional 25% of our assets in mortgages, mortgage-related assets securities, securities of REITs and other real estate-related assets. As of December 31, 2004, 69% of our assets consisted of mortgage loans or mortgage-related assets that represent the entire ownership in a pool of mortgage loans and another 21% of our assets were invested in mortgages, mortgage-related assets, securities of REITs and other real estate-related assets.

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

If we fail to qualify for that exemption, we may be required to restructure our activities. For example, if the market value of our investments in equity securities were to increase by an amount that caused less than 55% of our assets to be invested in mortgage loans or mortgage-related assets that represent the entire ownership in a

Table of Contents

pool of mortgage loans, we might have to sell equity securities in order to qualify for an exemption under the Investment Company Act. In the event we must restructure our activities, such restructuring could harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The existing REIT provisions of the Code substantially limit our ability to hedge mortgage-backed securities and government securities and related borrowings. Under these provisions, our aggregate gross income from qualified hedges (which generally include certain financial instruments used to hedge indebtedness incurred or to

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

When we originate mortgage loans, we rely heavily upon information supplied by third parties, including the information contained in the loan application, property appraisal, title information and employment and income documentation. If any of this information is intentionally or negligently misrepresented and such misrepresentation is not detected prior to loan funding, the value of the loan may be significantly lower than expected. Whether a misrepresentation is made by the loan applicant, the mortgage broker, another third party or one of our employees, we generally bear the risk of loss associated with the misrepresentation. A loan subject to a material misrepresentation is typically unsaleable or subject to repurchase if it is sold prior to detection of the misrepresentation, and the persons and entities involved are often difficult to locate and

it is often difficult to collect any monetary losses that we have suffered from them.

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We depend on our wholesale account executives and retail loan officers to attract borrowers by, among other things, developing relationships with financial institutions, other mortgage companies and brokers, real estate agents, borrowers and others. We believe that these relationships lead to repeat and referral business. The

Table of Contents

market for skilled account executives and loan officers is highly competitive and historically has experienced a high rate of turnover. In addition, if a manager is no longer employed by us, there is an increased likelihood that other members of his or her team will leave our employ as well. Competition for qualified account executives and loan officers may lead to increased hiring and retention costs. If we are unable to attract or retain a sufficient number of skilled account executives at manageable costs, we will be unable to continue to originate quality mortgage loans that we are able to sell for a profit, which would harm our results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When we sell loans, we are required to make customary representations and warranties about such loans to the loan purchaser. Our whole loan sale agreements require us to repurchase or substitute loans in the event we

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

RISKS RELATED TO OUR COMMON STOCK

The market price of our common stock and trading volume may be volatile, which could result in substantial losses for our stockholders.

The market price of our common stock may be highly volatile and subject to wide fluctuations. In addition, the trading volume in our common stock may fluctuate and cause significant price variations to occur. Some of the factors that could negatively affect our share price or result in fluctuations in the price or trading volume of our common stock include:

general market and economic conditions;

actual or anticipated changes in our future financial performance;

actual or anticipated changes in market interest rates;

competitive developments, including announcements by us or our competitors of new products or services or significant contracts, acquisitions, strategic partnerships or capital commitments;

the operations and stock performance of our competitors;

developments in the mortgage lending industry or the financial services sector generally;

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

fluctuations in our quarterly operating results;

actual or anticipated changes in financial estimates by securities analysts;

additions or departures of senior management and key personnel; and

actions by institutional stockholders.

We cannot assure you that the market price of our common stock will not fluctuate or decline significantly in the future. In addition, the stock market in general can experience considerable price and volume fluctuations.

We have not established a minimum distribution level and we may not have the ability to make distributions to our stockholders in the future.

We intend to make quarterly distributions to our stockholders and to distribute to our stockholders all or substantially all of our REIT taxable income, without regard to the dividends paid deduction and excluding net capital gains, in each year. We have not established a minimum distribution level and we may not be able to make distributions. In addition, some of our distributions may include a return of capital. All distributions will be made at the discretion of our board of directors and will depend on our earnings, our financial condition, maintenance of our REIT status and other factors as our board of directors may deem relevant from time to time. We cannot predict our ability to make distributions to our stockholders in the future.

Table of Contents

Future sales of shares of our common stock, including shares of common stock by our insiders, may depress the price of our common stock.

Any sales of a substantial number of shares of our common stock, or the perception that those sales might occur, may cause the market price of our common stock to decline. We are unable to predict whether significant numbers of shares will be sold in the open market in anticipation of or following a sale by insiders.

Our board of directors may authorize the issuance of additional shares that may cause dilution and may depress the price of our common stock.

Our charter permits our board of directors, without stockholder approval, to:

authorize the issuance of additional common stock or preferred stock in connection with future equity offerings, acquisitions of securities or other assets of companies; and

classify or reclassify any unissued common stock or preferred stock and to set the preferences, rights and other terms of the classified or reclassified shares, including the issuance of shares of preferred stock that have preference rights over the common stock with respect to dividends, liquidation, voting and other matters or shares of common stock that have preference rights over our common stock with respect to voting.

The issuance of additional shares of our common stock could be substantially dilutive to the shares of our common stock and may depress the price of our common stock.

Future offerings of debt securities, which would be senior to our common stock in liquidation, or equity securities, which would dilute our existing stockholders' interests and may be senior to our common stock for the purposes of distributions, may harm the market price of our common stock.

In the future, we will seek to access the capital markets from time to time by making additional offerings of debt and/or equity securities, including commercial paper, medium-term notes, senior or subordinated notes, preferred stock or common stock. We are not precluded by the terms of our charter from issuing additional debt or equity securities. Accordingly, we could become more highly leveraged, resulting in an increase in debt service obligations that could harm our ability to make expected distributions to stockholders and in an increased risk of default on our obligations. If we were to liquidate, holders of our debt and lenders with respect to other borrowings will receive a distribution of our available assets before the holders of our common stock. Additional equity offerings by us may dilute your interest in us or reduce the market price of your shares of our common stock, or both. Our preferred stock, if issued, could have a preference on distribution payments that could limit our ability to make a distribution to you. Because our decision to issue securities in any future offering will depend on market conditions and other factors beyond our control, we cannot predict or estimate the amount, timing or nature of our future offerings. Further, market conditions could require us to accept less favorable terms for the issuance of our securities in the future. Thus, you will bear the risk of our future offerings reducing the market price of your shares of our common stock and diluting your interest in us.

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Duties of directors with respect to unsolicited takeovers. Maryland law provides protection for Maryland corporations against unsolicited takeovers by limiting, among other things, the duties of the directors in unsolicited takeover situations. The duties of directors of Maryland corporations do not require them to (1) accept, recommend or respond to any proposal by a person seeking to acquire control of the corporation, (2) authorize the corporation to redeem any rights under, or modify or render inapplicable, any stockholders rights plan, (3) make a determination under the Maryland Business Combination Act or the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act, or (4) act or fail to act solely because of the effect of the act or failure to act may have on an acquisition or potential

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

acquisition of control of the corporation or the amount or type of consideration that may be offered or paid to the stockholders in an acquisition. Moreover, under Maryland law the act of the directors of a Maryland corporation relating

Table of Contents

to or affecting an acquisition or potential acquisition of control is not subject to any higher duty or greater scrutiny than is applied to any other act of a director. Maryland law also contains a statutory presumption that an act of a director of a Maryland corporation satisfies the applicable standards of conduct for directors under Maryland law.

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

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

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

TAX RISKS RELATED TO OUR STATUS AS A REIT

Your investment has various federal income tax risks.

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

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

In order to qualify as a REIT for U.S. federal income tax purposes, we must satisfy tests concerning, among other things, our sources of income, the nature and diversification of our assets, the amounts we distribute to our

Table of Contents

stockholders and the ownership of our stock. We may also be required to make distributions to our stockholders at disadvantageous times or when we do not have funds readily available for distribution. Thus, compliance with REIT requirements may cause us to forego opportunities, including certain acquisitions, we would otherwise pursue.

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

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

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

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

Excess inclusion income is generated when we issue debt obligations with two or more maturities and the terms of the payments on these obligations bear a relationship to the payments that we received on our mortgage loans or mortgage-backed securities securing those debt obligations. Since electing to be taxed as a REIT, we have engaged in non-REMIC CMO securitizations. These CMO securitizations have been structured so that these borrowings will give rise to excess inclusion income, and it is probable that future CMO securitizations will be structured in a similar manner. We may also enter into various repurchase agreements that have differing maturity dates and afford the lender the right to sell any pledged mortgage securities if we default on our obligations. Excess inclusion income could also result if we were to hold a residual interest in a REMIC. Finally, we may invest in equity securities of other REITs and it is possible that we might receive excess inclusion income from those investments. The amounts of excess inclusion income in any given year from these activities, transactions and investments could be significant.

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

Our taxable REIT subsidiaries, including New Century TRS and its subsidiaries, expect to earn income from activities that are prohibited for REITs, and will owe income taxes on the taxable income from these activities. For example, we expect that New Century TRS and its

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

subsidiaries will earn income from our loan origination and sales activities, as well as from other origination and servicing functions, which would generally not be

Table of Contents

qualifying income for purposes of the gross income tests applicable to REITs or might otherwise be subject to adverse tax liability if the income were generated by a REIT. New Century TRS and its subsidiaries will be taxable as C corporations and will be subject to federal, state and local income tax at the applicable corporate rates on their taxable income, notwithstanding our qualification as a REIT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

Moreover, we may be unable to acquire sufficient qualifying REIT assets, due to our inability to obtain adequate financing or otherwise, in which case we may fail to qualify as a REIT.

Table of Contents

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

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

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

To qualify as a REIT, not more than 20% of the value of our total assets may be represented by the securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries at the close of any calendar quarter, subject to a 30-day cure period following the close of the quarter and, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2005, subject to certain relief provisions even after the 30-day cure period. If the IRS determines that the value of our investment in New Century TRS and our other taxable REIT subsidiaries was more than 20% of the value of our total assets at the close of any calendar quarter, we could lose our REIT status. Our taxable REIT subsidiaries, including New Century TRS and its subsidiaries, conduct a substantial portion of our business activities, including a majority of our loan origination and servicing activities. We have monitored and will continue to monitor the value of our investment in New Century TRS and our other taxable REIT subsidiaries in relation to our other assets to comply with the 20% asset test and will conduct quarterly valuations to confirm compliance. Those determinations for the relevant past periods have indicated that the value of our investment in New Century TRS and our other taxable REIT subsidiaries in relation to our other assets was below the 20% threshold. In certain cases, we may need to borrow from third parties to acquire additional qualifying REIT assets or increase the amount and frequency of dividends from our taxable REIT subsidiaries in order to comply with the 20% asset test. There can be no assurance that we will be successful in that effort. Moreover, there can be no assurance that the IRS will agree with those determinations or valuations.

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

will consider the transfer to be null and void;

will not reflect the transaction on our books;

may institute legal action to enjoin the transaction;

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

will not recognize any voting rights for those shares; and

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

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

(1) the price paid by the transferee;

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

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

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

Table of Contents

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

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

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

our ability to manage risk, including credit risk;

our understanding of our competition;

market trends;

projected sources and uses of funds from operations;

potential liability with respect to legal proceedings; and

potential effects of proposed legislation and regulatory action.

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

those identified under the Risk Factors section of this prospectus;

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

the negative impact of economic slowdowns or recessions;

the effect of changes in interest rates;

the condition of the secondary markets for our products;

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

the assumptions underlying our residual values and repurchase allowances;

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

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

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

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

our ability to adequately hedge our residual values;

Table of Contents

our limited experience managing a REIT;

the initiation of a margin call under our credit facilities;

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

our ability to expand origination volume while maintaining low overhead;

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

our ability to adapt to and implement technological changes;

the stability of residential property values;

our ability to close our forward sale commitments;

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

the outcome of litigation or regulatory actions pending against us.

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

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

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of shares of our common stock offered by this prospectus. The proceeds from the offering are solely for the account of the selling stockholder.

Table of Contents

MATERIAL U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

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

financial institutions or insurance companies;

mutual funds;

tax exempt organizations;

insurance companies;

dealers or brokers in securities or foreign currencies;

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

foreign holders;

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

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

Taxation as a REIT

General

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

85% of our REIT ordinary income for the year;

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

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

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

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

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

the United States;

any state or political subdivision of the United States;

any foreign government;

any international organization;

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

any agency or instrumentality of any of the foregoing;

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

any rural electrical or telephone cooperative.

Table of Contents

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

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

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

Requirements for Qualification as a REIT

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

Qualified REIT Subsidiaries

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

Other Disregarded Entities and Partnerships

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

Taxable REIT Subsidiaries

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

Income Tests

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

rents from real property;

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

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

gain from the sale of real property or mortgage loans;

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

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

Second, at least 95% of our gross income, excluding gross income from prohibited transactions, for each taxable year must be derived from sources that qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test, and from (i) dividends, (ii) interest, (iii) for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2005, payments under certain qualifying hedging instruments and (iv) gain from the sale or disposition of stock, securities, or, for taxable years

Table of Contents

beginning before January 1, 2005, some hedging instruments. If less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC in which we hold an interest are real estate assets, we will be treated as receiving directly our proportionate share of the REMIC's income for purposes of the gross income tests.

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

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

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

Dividends

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

Interest

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

Table of Contents***Fee Income***

We may receive various fees in connection with the mortgage loans. The fees will be qualifying income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests if they are received in consideration for entering into an agreement to make a loan secured by real property, and the fees are not determined by income and profits. Therefore, commitment fees will generally be qualifying income for purposes of the income tests. Other fees, such as fees received for servicing loans for third parties and origination fees, are not qualifying income for purposes of either income test. Currently, we intend that all loan origination fees will be earned through our taxable REIT subsidiaries. In this case, the income earned by such subsidiaries from these services will not be included for purposes of our gross income tests.

Hedging Transactions

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

Rents from Real Property

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

Table of Contents

Prohibited Transactions Tax

A REIT will incur a 100% tax on the net income derived from any sale or other disposition of property, other than foreclosure property, that the REIT holds primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business. We believe that none of our portfolio assets are held-for-sale to customers and that a sale of any of our portfolio assets would not be in the ordinary course of our business. Whether a REIT holds an asset primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business depends, however, on the facts and circumstances in effect from time to time, including those related to a particular asset. We cannot provide assurance that we will avoid owning property that may be characterized as property that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business. After completing this offering, our taxable REIT subsidiaries will continue to sell a portion of the loans that they originate on a whole loan sale basis and any other loans the sale of which could be subject to the prohibited transactions tax. Sales of loans by our taxable REIT subsidiaries will not be subject to this 100% tax but such subsidiaries will be subject to regular corporate taxes on their net income.

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

Foreclosure Property

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

day that will give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test;

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

Failure to Satisfy Income Tests

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

Asset Tests

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

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

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

(5) government securities;

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We will not lose our status as a REIT if we fail to satisfy the asset tests at the end of a later quarter solely by reason of changes in the relative values of our assets. If the failure to satisfy the asset tests results from the acquisition of securities or other property during a quarter, the failure can be cured by a disposition of sufficient

Table of Contents

non-qualifying assets or acquisition of sufficient qualifying assets within 30 days after the close of that quarter. We maintain adequate records of the value of our assets to ensure compliance with the asset tests and intend to take any available action within 30 days after the close of any quarter as may be required to cure any noncompliance with the asset tests. We cannot ensure that these steps always will be successful. If we fail to cure the noncompliance with the asset tests within this 30-day period, we could fail to qualify as a REIT.

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

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

Annual Distribution Requirements Applicable to REITs

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Record Keeping Requirements

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

Failure to Qualify

If we fail to qualify for taxation as a REIT in any taxable year and the relief provisions do not apply, we will be subject to tax, including any applicable alternative minimum tax, on our taxable income at regular corporate rates. This would significantly reduce both our cash available for distribution to our stockholders and our earnings. If we fail to qualify as a REIT, we will not be required to make any distributions to stockholders and any distributions that are made will not be deductible. Moreover, all distributions to stockholders would be taxable as dividends to the extent of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, whether or not attributable

Table of Contents

to our capital gains. Subject to certain limitations of the Code, corporate distributees may be eligible for the dividends received deduction with respect to those distributions, and domestic noncorporate distributees may be eligible for the reduced income tax rate of 15% on such dividends. Unless we are entitled to relief under specific statutory provisions, we also will be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which qualification was lost. We cannot state whether in all circumstances we would be entitled to this statutory relief.

Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Common Stock

U.S. Holder

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

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

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

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

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

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

Distributions Generally

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

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

held as a capital asset in the hands of the U.S. holder.

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

Capital Gain Dividends

We may elect to designate distributions of our net capital gain as capital gain dividends. Capital gain dividends are taxed to U.S. holders as gain from the sale or exchange of a capital asset held for more than one

Table of Contents

year. This tax treatment applies regardless of the period during which the stockholders have held their stock. If we designate any portion of a dividend as a capital gain dividend, the amount that will be taxable to the stockholder as capital gain will be indicated to U.S. holders on IRS Form 1099-DIV. Corporate stockholders, however, may be required to treat up to 20% of capital gain dividends as ordinary income.

Instead of paying capital gain dividends, we may elect to require stockholders to include our undistributed net capital gains in their income. If we make such an election, U.S. holders (i) will include in their income as long-term capital gains their proportionate share of such undistributed capital gains and (ii) will be deemed to have paid their proportionate share of the tax paid by us on such undistributed capital gains and thereby receive a credit or refund for such amount. A U.S. holder will increase the basis in its stock by the difference between the amount of capital gain included in its income and the amount of tax it is deemed to have paid. Our earnings and profits will be adjusted appropriately.

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

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

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

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

Qualified Dividend Income

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

Other Tax Considerations

Distributions made by us and gain arising from the sale or exchange by a U.S. holder of our stock will not be treated as passive activity income, and as a result, U.S. holders generally will not be able to apply any passive losses against this income or gain. In addition, taxable distributions

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

Table of Contents

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

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

Sales of Common Stock

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

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

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

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

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

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

Non-U.S. Holder

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

Distributions

Distributions by us to a non-U.S. holder of common stock that are neither attributable to gain from sales or exchanges by us of U.S. real property interests nor designated by us as capital gains dividends will be treated as dividends of ordinary income to the extent that they are made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits. These distributions ordinarily will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a gross basis at a rate of 30%, or a lower rate as permitted under an applicable income tax treaty, unless the dividends are treated as effectively connected with the conduct by the non-U.S. holder of a U.S. trade or business (and attributable to a U.S. permanent

Table of Contents

establishment, in the case of a non-U.S. holder entitled to the benefits of an applicable tax treaty). Under some treaties, however, lower rates generally applicable to dividends do not apply to dividends from REITs. Further, reduced treaty rates are not available to the extent that the income allocated to the foreign stockholder is excess inclusion income. Excess inclusion income will generally be allocated to stockholders to the extent we have excess inclusion income that exceeds our undistributed REIT taxable income in a particular year. See Taxable Mortgage Pools and REMICs. Dividends that are effectively connected with a trade or business will be subject to tax on a net basis, that is, after allowance for deductions, at graduated rates, in the same manner as U.S. holders are taxed with respect to these dividends, and are generally not subject to withholding. Applicable certification and disclosure requirements must be satisfied to be exempt from withholding under the effectively connected income exception. Any dividends received by a corporate non-U.S. holder that is engaged in a U.S. trade or business also may be subject to an additional branch profits tax at a 30% rate, or lower applicable treaty rate. We expect to withhold U.S. income tax at the rate of 30% on any dividend distributions not designated as (or deemed to be) capital gain dividends made to a non-U.S. holder unless:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

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

We will be required to withhold and remit to the IRS 35% of any distributions to non-U.S. holders that are designated as capital gain dividends, or, if greater, 35% of a distribution that could have been designated as a capital gain dividend, whether or not attributable to sales of U.S. real property interests. Distributions can be designated as capital gains to the extent of our net capital gain for the taxable year of the distribution. The amount withheld, which for individual non-U.S. holders may exceed the actual tax liability, is creditable against the non-U.S. holder's U.S. federal income tax liability.

Sales of Common Stock

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ending on the date of the sale or exchange.

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

Table of Contents

Taxation of Tax-Exempt Holders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Backup Withholding Tax and Information Reporting

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

Backup withholding generally will not apply to dividends paid to a non-U.S. holder of our common stock if such holder furnishes appropriate documentation of its non-U.S. status. However, certain information reporting will apply with respect to dividend payments even if certification is provided. The payment of proceeds from a non-U.S. holder's disposition of our common stock to or through the U.S. office of any broker, domestic or foreign, will be subject to information reporting and possible backup withholding unless such holder certifies as to its non-U.S. status under penalties of perjury or otherwise establishes an exemption, provided that the broker does not have actual knowledge that such holder is a U.S. person or that the conditions of an exemption are not, in fact, satisfied. The payment of proceeds from a non-U.S. holder's disposition of our common stock to or

Table of Contents

through a non-U.S. office of either a U.S. broker or a non-U.S. broker that is a U.S.-related person will be subject to information reporting, but not backup withholding, unless such broker has documentary evidence in its files that such holder is not a U.S. person and the broker has no knowledge to the contrary, or such holder establishes an exemption. For this purpose, a U.S.-related person is (i) a controlled foreign corporation, or CFC, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, (ii) a foreign person 50% of more of whose gross income from all sources for certain periods is derived from activities that are effectively connected with the conduct of a U.S. trade or business or (iii) a foreign partnership that is either engaged in the conduct of a trade or business in the United States or of which 50% or more of its income or capital interests are held by U.S. persons. Neither information reporting nor backup withholding will apply to a payment of the proceeds of a disposition of our common stock by or through a non-U.S. office or a non-U.S. broker that is not a U.S.-related person. Copies of any information returns filed with the IRS may be made available by the IRS, under the provisions of a specific treaty or agreement, to the taxing authorities of the country in which a holder resides.

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

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

Sunset of Reduced Tax Rate Provisions

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

State and Local Taxes

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

Proposed Legislation

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

regarding the effects of any such legislation.

Table of Contents

SELLING STOCKHOLDER

The selling stockholder may from time to time offer to sell pursuant to this prospectus any or all of the shares of our common stock purchased in the private placement. When we refer to the selling stockholder in this prospectus, we mean Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group, Inc., as well as the permitted transferees, pledges, donees, assignees, successors and others who later come to hold any of the selling stockholder's interests other than through a public sale.

Based on the information provided to us by the selling stockholder, the selling stockholder directly held 636,885 shares of our common stock as of March 31, 2005. Friedman, Billings, Ramsey & Co., Inc., a wholly-owned broker-dealer subsidiary of the selling stockholder held an additional 15,000 shares as of March 31, 2005. In addition, the selling stockholder may be deemed to beneficially own additional shares of our common stock through its ownership interests in several hedge funds that it manages through its wholly-owned subsidiary FBR Investment Management, Inc. As of March 31, 2005, such hedge funds managed by FBR Investment Management, Inc. owned a total of 986,978 shares of our common stock over which they exercise voting control. As of March 31, 2005, the selling stockholder and its affiliates, through their interest in such hedge funds, had an aggregate indirect economic benefit in 50,132 of these shares. In the ordinary course of business, Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group, Inc. and its affiliates may actively trade in our common stock for their own accounts and for the accounts of customers and, accordingly, may at any time hold a long or short position in such securities.

Pursuant to this prospectus, the selling stockholder may offer 636,885 shares of our common stock. Assuming that the selling stockholder sells all of the shares of our common stock beneficially owned by them that have been registered by us and does not acquire any additional shares of our common stock during the offering, the selling stockholder will not have beneficial ownership over any shares of our common stock after the offering. In our public offering that closed on October 6, 2004, Friedman, Billings, Ramsey & Co., Inc., an affiliate of the selling stockholder, acted as a joint book-running manager and a representative of the underwriters, and received customary fees for providing certain financial advisory and investment banking services.

We cannot advise you as to whether the selling stockholder may have sold, transferred or otherwise disposed of, or may sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of, at any time and from time to time, the shares of our common stock in transactions exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act, after the date on which the selling stockholder provided the information to us.

Information concerning the selling stockholder may change from time to time, and any changed information will be set forth in prospectus supplements if and when required.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We are registering the shares of our common stock covered by this prospectus to permit the selling stockholder to conduct public secondary trades of these securities from time to time after the date of this prospectus. We will not receive any of the proceeds from the offering of the shares of our common stock by the selling stockholder. We have been advised by the selling stockholder that the selling stockholder or pledges, donees or transferees of, or other successors in interest to, the selling stockholder may sell all or a portion of the shares of our common stock beneficially owned by them and offered hereby from time to time either:

directly; or

through underwriters, broker-dealers or agents, who may act solely as agents or who may acquire the shares of our common stock as principals or as both, and who may receive compensation in the form of discounts, commissions or concessions from the selling stockholder or from the purchasers of the shares of our common stock for whom they may act as agent (which compensation as to a particular broker-dealer may be less than or in excess of customary commissions).

The shares of our common stock may be sold from time to time in one or more transactions at:

fixed prices, which may be changed;

prevailing market prices at the time of sale;

varying prices determined at the time of sale; or

negotiated prices.

Unless otherwise permitted by law, if the shares are to be sold pursuant to this prospectus by pledges, donees or transferees of, or other successors in interest to, the selling stockholder, then we must file an amendment to this registration statement under applicable provisions of the Securities Act amending the list of the selling stockholders to include the pledge, transferee or other successors in interest as selling stockholders under this prospectus.

Determination of Offering Price

Except as may be described in any prospectus supplement accompanying this prospectus, the selling stockholder may offer its shares of our common stock pursuant to this prospectus at fixed prices, which may be changed, at prevailing market prices at the time of sale, at varying prices determined at the time of sale, or at negotiated prices. The offering price will be determined by the participants in the purchase and sale (or other transfer) transaction based on factors they consider important.

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

The aggregate proceeds to the selling stockholder from the sale of the shares of our common stock offered by the selling stockholder hereby will be the purchase price of the shares of our common stock less discounts and commissions, if any.

Method of Distribution

The sales described in the preceding paragraphs may be affected in transactions:

on any national securities exchange or quotation service on which the shares of our common stock may be listed or quoted at the time of sale;

in the over-the-counter market;

in transactions (which may include underwritten transactions) otherwise than on such exchanges or services or in the over-the-counter market;

Table of Contents

through the writing of options whether the options are listed on an option exchange or otherwise; or

through the settlement of short sales (except that the selling stockholder may not satisfy its obligations in connection with short sales or hedging transactions entered into before the effective date of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part by delivering securities registered under such registration statement).

These transactions may include block transactions or crosses. Crosses are transactions in which the same broker acts as an agent on both sides of the trade.

In connection with the sales of the shares of our common stock, the selling stockholder may enter into hedging transactions with broker-dealers. These broker-dealers may in turn engage in short sales of the shares of our common stock short and deliver shares of our common stock to close out short positions, or loan or pledge shares of our common stock to broker-dealers that in turn may sell the shares of our common stock.

The selling stockholder or its successor in interest may also enter into option or other transactions with broker-dealers that require the delivery by such broker-dealers of the shares of our common stock which may be resold thereafter pursuant to this prospectus if the shares of our common stock are delivered by the selling stockholder. However, if the shares of our common stock are to be delivered by the selling stockholder's successors in interest, unless permitted by law, we must file an amendment to this registration statement under applicable provisions of the Securities Act amending the list of the selling stockholder to include the successors in interest as selling stockholders under this prospectus.

To our knowledge, there are currently no plans, arrangements or understandings between the selling stockholder and any underwriter, broker-dealer or agent regarding the sale of the shares of our common stock by the selling stockholder. The selling stockholder might not sell any, or might not sell all, of the shares of our common stock offered by them pursuant to this prospectus. In addition, we cannot assure you that a selling stockholder will not transfer the shares of our common stock by other means not described in this prospectus.

To the extent required, upon being notified by the selling stockholder that any arrangement has been entered into with any agent, underwriter or broker-dealer for the sale of the shares of our common stock through a block trade, special offering, exchange distribution or secondary distribution or a purchase by any agent, underwriter or broker-dealer(s), the name(s) of the selling stockholder(s) and of the participating agent, underwriter or broker-dealer(s), specific common stock to be sold, the respective purchase prices and public offering prices, any applicable commissions or discounts, and other facts material to the transaction will be set forth in a supplement to this prospectus or a post-effective amendment to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, as appropriate.

The selling stockholder or its successors in interest may from time to time pledge or grant a security interest in some or all of the shares of our common stock, and if the selling stockholder defaults in the performance of its secured obligation, the pledges or secured parties may offer and sell the shares of our common stock from time to time under this prospectus; however, in the event of a pledge or the default on the performance of a secured obligation by the selling stockholders, in order for the shares of our common stock to be sold under cover of this registration statement, unless permitted by law, we must file an amendment to this registration statement under applicable provisions of the Securities Act amending the list of selling stockholders to include the pledge, transferee, secured party or other successors in interest as selling stockholders under this prospectus.

In addition, any securities covered by this prospectus which qualify for sale pursuant to Rule 144 of the Securities Act may be sold under Rule 144 rather than pursuant to this prospectus.

In order to comply with the securities laws of some states, if applicable, the shares of our common stock may be sold in these jurisdictions only through registered or licensed brokers or dealers.

Table of Contents

The selling stockholder and any other person participating in such distribution will be subject to the Exchange Act. The Exchange Act rules include, without limitation, Regulation M, which may limit the timing of purchases and sales of any of the shares of our common stock by the selling stockholder and any such other person. In addition, Regulation M of the Exchange Act may restrict the ability of any person engaged in the distribution of the shares of our common stock to engage in market-making activities with respect to the particular shares of our common stock being distributed for a period of up to five business days prior to the commencement of this distribution. This may affect the marketability of the shares of our common stock and the ability of any person or entity to engage in market-making activities with respect to the underlying shares of our common stock.

Underwriting Discounts and Commissions, Indemnification and Expenses

Brokers, dealers, underwriters or agents participating in the distribution of the shares of our common stock pursuant to this prospectus as agents may receive compensation in the form of commissions, discounts or concessions from the selling stockholder and/or purchasers of the shares of our common stock for whom such broker-dealers may act as agent, or to whom they may sell as principal, or both (which compensation as to a particular broker-dealer may be less than or in excess of customary commissions).

The selling stockholder and any brokers, dealers, agents or underwriters that participate with the selling stockholder in the distribution of the shares of our common stock pursuant to this prospectus may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act. In this case, any commissions received by these broker-dealers, agents or underwriters and any profit on the resale of the shares of our common stock purchased by them may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts under the Securities Act. In addition, any profits realized by the selling stockholder may be deemed to be underwriting commissions. Neither we nor any selling stockholder can presently estimate the amount of such compensation. If a selling stockholder is deemed to be an underwriter, the selling stockholder may be subject to certain statutory liabilities including, but not limited to Sections 11, 12 and 17 of the Securities Act and Rule 10b-5 under the Exchange Act. Selling stockholders who are deemed underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act will be subject to the prospectus delivery requirements of the Securities Act.

Pursuant to the registration rights agreement, which appears as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, we have agreed to indemnify the selling stockholder, which facilitates the disposition of registrable securities, and each of its respective officers, directors and each person who controls such selling stockholder within the meaning of Section 15 of the Securities Act or Section 20(a) of the Exchange Act against specified liabilities arising under the Securities Act. The selling stockholder has agreed to indemnify us and each person, if any, who controls the initial purchaser or a selling stockholder within the meaning of Section 15 of the Securities Act or Section 20(a) of the Exchange Act, against specified liabilities arising under the Securities Act.

We have agreed, among other things, to bear all registration expenses we incur other than (a) \$50,000 as a liquidated sum (which is the same as, and not in addition to, the liquidated sum of \$50,000 payable under each of (x) the purchase agreement and (y) the underwriting agreement relating to our public offering in October 2004) for all costs and expenses (including, without limitation, legal fees) we incur in the preparation of draft amendments to the registration statement on Form S-3, as amended, of New Century (including Amendment No. 7 to such registration statement) and related documents and agreements pertaining to the private placement contemplated by the purchase agreement, and (b) all printing, delivery, and distribution costs and Commission filing fees incurred and associated with future registrations and issuances of Common Stock contemplated by the registration rights agreement and the purchase agreement, the costs, expenses and fees in each case of which shall be paid by the selling stockholder or its affiliates.

Table of Contents

Registration Period

In connection with our October 2004 private placement of common stock, we entered into a registration rights agreement with the selling stockholder pursuant to which we agreed to file the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. The registration rights agreement appears as an exhibit to this registration statement.

We will, subject to blackout periods as permitted by the registration rights agreement, use our commercially reasonable efforts to cause the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part to remain effective for the period beginning on the date the registration statement becomes effective and terminating on the beginning of the earlier of (a) the second anniversary of the registration rights agreement and (b) the earliest date upon which all shares then held by the selling stockholder are no longer Registrable Securities (as defined in the registration rights agreement).

Our obligation to keep the registration statement, of which this prospectus is a part, effective is subject to specified, permitted exceptions. If we furnish to the selling stockholder a certificate signed by our Chief Executive Officer, our President and Chief Operating Officer, or our Chief Financial Officer (a Suspension Certificate) stating that in the reasonable judgment of the management it would be detrimental or potentially detrimental to New Century or its stockholders for a registration statement to be filed or, as the case may be, remain effective, then we may suspend the selling stockholder's use of this prospectus and offers and sales of the shares of common stock pursuant to this prospectus for a period not to exceed 90 consecutive days at a time, provided, however, that we may not utilize this right more than once in any 12-month period; provided, further, we may, upon furnishing the selling stockholder with an additional Suspension Certificate impose one additional fifteen (15) consecutive day Suspension Period (as defined in the registration rights agreement) in the same 12-month period, but not immediately following the cessation of the aforementioned 90-day period.

Stock Market Listing

Our common stock is currently listed on the NYSE under the symbol NEW.

Stabilization and Other Transactions

As described above, the selling stockholder may utilize methods of sale that amount to a distribution under federal securities laws. The anti-manipulation rules under the Exchange Act, including, without limitation, Regulation M, may restrict certain activities of, and limit the timing of purchases and sales of securities by, the selling stockholder and other persons participating in a distribution of securities. Furthermore, under Regulation M, persons engaged in a distribution of securities are prohibited from simultaneously engaging in market making and certain other activities with respect to such securities for a specified period of time before the commencement of such distributions subject to specified exceptions or exemptions. All of the foregoing may affect the marketability of the securities offered by this prospectus.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

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

EXPERTS

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

WHERE YOU CAN FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT NEW CENTURY

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Copies of these materials may be examined without charge at the public reference room at 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Room 1024, Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the Securities and Exchange Commission at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. In addition, the Securities and Exchange Commission maintains a Web site, <http://www.sec.gov>, which contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information regarding registrants, including us, that file electronically with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Table of Contents

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notwithstanding the foregoing, unless specifically stated to the contrary, none of the information that we disclose under Items 2.02 or 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K that we may from time to time furnish to the Securities and Exchange Commission will be incorporated by reference into, or otherwise included in, this prospectus.

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

Table of Contents

636,885 Shares

Common Stock

PROSPECTUS

April , 2005

Table of Contents**PART II****INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS****ITEM 14. OTHER EXPENSES OF ISSUANCE AND DISTRIBUTION**

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

Registration Fee Securities and Exchange Commission	\$ 3,223
Accounting Fees and Expenses	4,000
Legal Fees and Expenses	75,000
Printing Fees and Expenses	25,000
Trustee and Transfer Agent Fees	0
Miscellaneous	2,777
	<hr/>
Total	\$ 110,000
	<hr/> <hr/>

All expenses in connection with the issuance and distribution of securities being offered shall be borne by us other than as provided by the registration rights agreement.

ITEM 15. INDEMNIFICATION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

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

II-1

Table of Contents

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

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

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

ITEM 16. EXHIBITS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT SCHEDULES

(a) EXHIBITS

Exhibit	
Number	Description
4.1**	Specimen Certificate for the Registrant's Common Stock
4.2***	Registration Rights Agreement dated as of October 6, 2004, by and between the Registrant and Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group, Inc.
5.1*	Opinion of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP regarding legality of the securities being registered
8.1*	Opinion of O Melveny & Myers LLP regarding certain tax matters
23.1*	Consent of KPMG LLP, Independent Registered Accounting Firm
23.2*	Consent of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP (included as part of Exhibit 5.1)
23.3*	Consent of O Melveny & Myers LLP (included as part of Exhibit 8.1)
24.1	Power of Attorney

* Filed herewith.

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

*** Incorporated herein by reference to the Registrant's Form 8-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 6, 2004. Included on the signature page to this Registration Statement.

(b) FINANCIAL STATEMENT SCHEDULES

None.

ITEM 17. UNDERTAKINGS

(a) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

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

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

II-2

Table of Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Edgar Filing: NEW CENTURY FINANCIAL CORP - Form S-3

Edward F. Gotschall

/s/ HAROLD A. BLACK

Director

April 29, 2005

Harold A. Black

/s/ FREDRIC J. FORSTER

Director

April 29, 2005

Fredric J. Forster

/s/ DONALD E. LANGE

Director

April 29, 2005

Donald E. Lange

II-4

Table of Contents

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
/s/ WILLIAM J. POPEJOY <hr/> William J. Popejoy	Director	April 29, 2005
/s/ MICHAEL M. SACHS <hr/> Michael M. Sachs	Director	April 29, 2005
/s/ TERRENCE P. SANDVIK <hr/> Terrence P. Sandvik	Director	April 29, 2005
/s/ RICHARD A. ZONA <hr/> Richard A. Zona	Director	April 29, 2005

Table of Contents**EXHIBIT INDEX**

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

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

Exhibit	
Number	Description
4.1**	Specimen Certificate for the Registrant's Common Stock
4.2***	Registration Rights Agreement dated as of October 6, 2004, by and between the Registrant and Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group, Inc.
5.1*	Opinion of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP regarding legality of the securities being registered
8.1*	Opinion of O Melveny & Myers LLP regarding certain tax matters
23.1*	Consent of KPMG LLP, Independent Registered Accounting Firm
23.2*	Consent of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP (included as part of Exhibit 5.1)
23.3*	Consent of O Melveny & Myers LLP (included as part of Exhibit 8.1)
24.1	Power of Attorney

* Filed herewith.

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

*** Incorporated herein by reference to the Registrant's Form 8-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 6, 2004. Included on the signature page to this Registration Statement.