

AMERICAN EQUITY INVESTMENT LIFE HOLDING CO
Form S-3
April 05, 2005

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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 5, 2005

Registration No. 333-

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, DC 20549

FORM S-3

REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

American Equity Investment Life Holding Company

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Charter)

Iowa

(State or Other Jurisdiction of
Incorporation or Organization)

42-1447959

(I.R.S. Employer
Identification Number)

**5000 Westown Parkway, Suite 440
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266
(515) 221-0002**

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

**David J. Noble
Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, President and Treasurer
5000 Westown Parkway, Suite 440
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266
(515) 221-0002**

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

Copies to:

**William R. Kunkel
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP
333 West Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois
(312) 407-0700**

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time following the effectiveness 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.

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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. o

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

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title Of Each Class Of Securities To Be Registered	Amount To Be Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price	Amount Of Registration Fee
5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes due 2024	\$250,000,000(1)	100%(2)	\$250,000,000(2)	\$29,425
Series B 5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes due 2024	\$10,000,000(1)	100%(2)	\$10,000,000(2)	\$1,177
Common Stock, par value \$1.00 per share	17,968,210 shares(3)			(4)

(1) Represents the aggregate principal amount at maturity of the notes originally issued by the registrant.

(2) Equals the aggregate principal amount of the notes being registered. Estimated solely for purposes of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

(3) Represents the number of shares of common stock initially issuable upon conversion of the notes. Pursuant to Rule 416 under the Securities Act, also includes such indeterminate number of shares of common stock as may be issued from time to time upon conversion of the notes as a result of the anti-dilution provisions contained therein.

(4) No separate consideration will be received for the shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of the notes, and, therefore, no registration fee is required pursuant to Rule 457(i) under the Securities Act.

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 of 1933 or until this registration statement shall become effective on such date as the Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. The selling securityholders may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securitized and Exchange Commission is effective. This Prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and is not soliciting an offer to by these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Subject To Completion, Dated April 5, 2005

PROSPECTUS

\$260,000,000

**American Equity
Investment Life Holding Company**

\$250,000,000 5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes due 2024
\$10,000,000 Series B 5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes due 2024

This prospectus covers resales by holders from time to time of our 5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes due 2024, or the "Initial Notes," our Series B 5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes due 2024, or the "Additional Notes" and together with the Initial Notes, the "notes," and shares of our common stock into which the notes are convertible. The Initial Notes and the Additional Notes constitute separate series of securities under the indenture governing the notes and, accordingly, each series of notes has been assigned a different CUSIP number and the holders of each series constitute a separate class under the indenture. In addition, the Initial Notes and the Additional Notes were sold at different issue prices and thus each series has a different projected payment schedule pursuant to which interest is deemed to accrue for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

We will not receive any proceeds from the resale of the notes or the shares of common stock issuable upon their conversion. The notes are convertible, at your option, prior to the maturity date into cash and shares of our common stock in the following circumstances:

during any fiscal quarter commencing after the date of original issuance of the notes, if the closing sale price of our common stock for at least 20 trading days in the period of 30 consecutive trading days ending on the last trading day of the fiscal quarter preceding the quarter in which the conversion occurs is more than 120% of the conversion price of the notes in effect on that 30th trading day;

if we have called the particular notes for redemption and the redemption has not yet occurred; or

upon the occurrence of specified corporate transactions.

Holders may convert any outstanding notes into cash and shares of our common stock at an initial Conversion Price per share of \$14.47. This represents a Conversion Rate of approximately 69.1085 shares of common stock per \$1,000 principal amount of notes. Subject to certain exceptions described in "Description of the Notes," at the time notes are tendered for conversion, the value (the "Conversion Value") of the cash and shares of our common stock, if any, to be received by a holder converting \$1,000 principal amount of the notes will be determined by multiplying the Conversion Rate by the Ten Day Average Closing Stock Price, which equals the average of the closing prices per share of our common stock on the New York Stock Exchange on the ten consecutive trading days beginning on the second trading day following the day the notes are submitted for conversion. We will deliver the Conversion Value to holders as follows: (1) an amount in cash (the "Principal Return") equal to the lesser of (a) the aggregate Conversion Value of the notes to be converted or (b) the aggregate principal amount of the notes to be converted, (2) if the aggregate Conversion Value of the notes to be converted is greater than the Principal Return, an amount in shares (the "Net Shares"), determined as set forth below, equal to such aggregate Conversion Value less the Principal Return (the "Net Share Amount") and (3) an amount in cash in lieu of fractional shares of common stock. We will pay the Principal Return and cash in lieu of fractional shares and deliver the Net Shares, if any, as promptly as practicable after determination of the Net Share Amount. The number of Net Shares to be paid will be determined by dividing the Net Share Amount by the Ten Day Average Closing Stock Price, rounded down to the nearest whole share. Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "AEL." On April 4, 2005, the reported last sale price of our common stock was \$12.46 per share.

The notes bear interest at a rate of 5.25% per annum. Interest on the notes is payable semi annually in arrears on June 6 and December 6 of each year, beginning on June 6, 2005. In addition to regular interest on a series of notes, beginning with the six-month interest period ending June 6, 2012, we will also pay contingent interest during any six-month interest period in which the average trading price per \$1,000 principal amount of a series of notes for the five-day trading period ending on the third day immediately preceding the first day of such six-month interest period equals 120% or more of the principal amount of such series of notes. During any interest period in which contingent interest shall be payable, the contingent interest payable on the series of notes will equal 0.50% per annum

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based on such average trading price.

The notes mature on December 6, 2024. We may redeem some or all of the notes at any time or from time to time on or after December 15, 2011, at a redemption price equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued and unpaid interest (including contingent interest and liquidated damages, if any) up to but not including the date of redemption, payable in cash. Holders may require us to repurchase all or a portion of their notes on December 15, 2011, 2014 and 2019 for a repurchase price equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued and unpaid interest (including contingent interest and liquidated damages, if any) up to but not including the date of repurchase, payable in cash. Upon a change in control, as defined in the indenture governing the notes, holders will have the right to require us to repurchase all or a portion of their notes for a period of time after the change of control. The repurchase price will be equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued and unpaid interest (including contingent interest and liquidated damages, if any) up to but not including the date of repurchase, payable in cash.

The notes are our senior unsecured obligations and each series ranks equally in right of payment with the other series and any of our other existing and future senior indebtedness and senior to any existing and future subordinated indebtedness. The notes rank junior in right of payment to any existing and future secured indebtedness to the extent of the value of the assets securing such secured indebtedness. The notes are structurally subordinated to all liabilities of our subsidiaries.

Prior to the offering, the notes were eligible for trading in The PortalSM Market of the Nasdaq Stock Market, Inc. The notes sold by means of this prospectus are not expected to remain eligible for trading on the The PortalSM Market. We do not intend to list the notes for trading on any national securities exchange or the Nasdaq National Market.

***Investing in the notes and our common stock issuable upon their conversion involves risks.
See "Risk Factors" beginning on page 7 of this prospectus.***

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

The date of this prospectus is _____, 2005.

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In this prospectus, unless otherwise indicated, all references to "we," "us," "our," or "American Equity" refer to American Equity Investment Life Holding Company and, where applicable, our life insurance subsidiaries, American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company and American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company of New York. "American Equity Life" refers to our life insurance subsidiary American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we file with them, which means that we can disclose important business and financial information to you that is not included in or delivered with this prospectus by referring you to publicly filed documents that contain the omitted information. We provide a list of all documents we incorporate by reference in this prospectus under "Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference" below.

You may read and copy the information that we incorporate by reference in this prospectus as well as other reports, proxy statements and other information that we file with the SEC at the public reference facility maintained by the SEC at 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the public reference room. In addition, we are required to file electronic versions of those materials with the SEC through the SEC's EDGAR system. The SEC maintains a website at <http://www.sec.gov> that contains reports, proxy statements and other information that registrants, such as us, file electronically with the SEC.

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. Neither the notes nor any shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of the notes are being offered in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. The information contained in this prospectus speaks only as of the date of this prospectus and the information in the documents incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus speaks only as of the respective dates those documents were filed with the SEC.

We have filed with the SEC a registration statement on Form S-3 under the Securities Act covering the securities described in this prospectus. This prospectus does not contain all of the information included in the registration statement, some of which is contained in exhibits included with or incorporated by reference into the registration statement. The registration statement, including the exhibits contained or incorporated by reference therein, can be read at the SEC's website or at the

SEC offices referred to above. Any statement made in this prospectus concerning the contents of any contract, agreement or other document is only a summary of the actual contract, agreement or other document. If we have filed or incorporated by reference any contract, agreement or other document as an exhibit to the registration statement, you should read the exhibit for a more complete understanding of the document or matter involved. Each statement regarding a contract, agreement or other document is qualified in its entirety by reference to the actual document.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

Rather than include certain information in this prospectus that we have already included in documents filed with the SEC, we are incorporating this information by reference, which means that we are disclosing important information to you by referring to those publicly filed documents that contain the information. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. Accordingly, we incorporate by reference the following document filed with the SEC by us:

Our Annual Report on Form 10-K/A for the year ended December 31, 2004.

We also incorporate by reference any future filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (other than information in such future filings deemed, under SEC rules, not to have been filed) after the date of this prospectus and until all of the notes to which this prospectus relates are sold or the offering is otherwise terminated.

The information incorporated by reference in this prospectus is an important part of this prospectus. Any statement contained in a document incorporated or considered to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus shall be considered to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent a statement contained in this prospectus or in any other subsequently filed document that is or is considered to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus modifies or supersedes such statement. Any statement that is modified or superceded shall not, except as so modified or superceded, constitute a part of this prospectus.

You may request a copy of the filings which we incorporate by reference, at no cost, by writing or telephoning us as follows: American Equity Investment Life Holding Company, 5000 Westown Parkway, Suite 440, West Des Moines, Iowa 50266, Attention: Shareholder Relations, (515) 221-0002. Exhibits to the filings will not be sent, however, unless those exhibits have been specifically incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus (including the information incorporated by reference) contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. All statements, trend analyses and other information contained in this prospectus and elsewhere (such as in filings by us with the SEC, press releases, presentations by us or our management or oral statements) relative to markets for our products and trends in our operations or financial results, as well as other statements including words such as "anticipate," "believe," "plan," "estimate," "expect," "intend" and other similar expressions, constitute forward-looking statements. We caution that these statements may and often do vary from actual results and the differences between these statements and actual results can be material. Accordingly, we cannot assure you that actual results will not differ materially from those expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements.

Factors that could contribute to these differences include, among other things:

general economic conditions and other factors, including prevailing interest rate levels and stock and credit market performance which may effect (among other things) our ability to sell our products, our ability to access capital resources and the costs associated therewith, the market value of our investments and the lapse rate and profitability of policies;

customer response to new products and marketing initiatives;

changes in the Federal income tax laws and regulations which may affect the relative income tax advantages of our products;

increasing competition in the sale of annuities;

regulatory changes or actions, including those relating to regulation of financial services affecting (among other things) bank sales and underwriting of insurance products and regulation of the sale, underwriting and pricing of products; and

the other risks or uncertainties detailed throughout this prospectus, including the factors discussed in the section of this prospectus entitled "Risk Factors."

You should not place undue reliance on any forward-looking statements. Forward-looking information is intended to reflect opinions as of the date of this prospectus. Except as otherwise required by applicable laws, we undertake no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements described in this prospectus, whether as a result of new information, future events, changed circumstances or any other reason after the date of this prospectus.

SUMMARY

The following summary contains basic information about us and this offering. It does not contain all of the information that you should consider in making your investment decision. You should read and consider carefully all of the information contained and incorporated by reference in this prospectus, including the information set forth under "Risk Factors," as well as the more detailed financial information, including the consolidated financial statements and related notes thereto, appearing elsewhere or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, before making an investment decision.

American Equity Investment Life Holding Company

We are a full service underwriter of a broad line of annuity and insurance products. We develop, market, issue and administer these annuities and life insurance products through our life insurance subsidiaries, American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company and American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company of New York. Our business consists primarily of the sale of fixed rate and index annuities and, accordingly, we have only one business segment. Our business strategy is to focus on our annuity business and earn relatively predictable returns by managing investment spreads and investment risk. We are currently licensed to sell our products in 48 states and the District of Columbia.

We were incorporated in the State of Delaware on December 15, 1995, and reincorporated in the State of Iowa on January 7, 1998. Our executive offices are located at 5000 Westown Parkway, Suite 440, West Des Moines, IA 50266, and our telephone number is (515) 221-0002. Our web site address is www.american-equity.com. Information contained on our website is not incorporated by reference in and does not constitute a part of this prospectus.

The Offering

Issuer	American Equity Investment Life Holding Company
Securities Offered	<p>\$250.0 million aggregate principal amount of 5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes Due 2024 (the "Initial Notes"), \$10.0 million aggregate principal amount of Series B 5.25% Contingent Convertible Senior Notes Due 2024 (the "Additional Notes" and together with the Initial Notes, the "notes") and shares of our common stock issuable upon conversion of the notes. The Initial Notes and the Additional Notes constitute separate series of securities under the indenture governing the notes and, accordingly, each series of notes has been assigned a different CUSIP number and the holders of each series constitute a separate class under the indenture.</p>
Maturity	December 6, 2024.
Ranking	<p>The notes are our senior unsecured obligations and each series ranks equally in right of payment with the other series and any of our other existing and future senior indebtedness and senior to any existing and future subordinated indebtedness. The notes rank junior in right of payment to all of our existing and future secured indebtedness to the extent of the value of the assets securing such secured indebtedness. As of December 31, 2004, we had no senior unsecured indebtedness other than the notes, no secured indebtedness and \$173.6 million of subordinated indebtedness, which ranks junior in right of payment to the notes. In addition, the notes are effectively subordinate to all liabilities, including policyholder liabilities, trade payables, lease obligations and liquidation preference on any preferred stock, whether or not secured, of any of our subsidiaries and any subsidiaries that we may in the future acquire or establish. As of December 31, 2004, our subsidiaries had total liabilities of approximately \$10.4 billion (including policy benefit reserves of approximately \$9.8 billion).</p>
Interest Rate and Payment Dates	<p>The notes bear interest at an annual rate equal to 5.25%. Interest is payable semi-annually in arrears on June 6 and December 6 of each year, each an interest payment date, beginning June 6, 2005.</p>
Contingent Interest	<p>In addition to regular interest on a series of notes, beginning with the six-month interest period ending June 6, 2012, we will also pay contingent interest during any six-month interest period in which the average trading price per \$1,000 principal amount of a series of notes for the five-day trading period ending on the third day immediately preceding the first day of such six-month interest period equals 120% or more of the principal amount of such series of notes.</p>

During any interest period in which contingent interest shall be payable on a series of notes, the contingent interest payable per \$1,000 principal amount of such series of notes will equal 0.50% per annum of the average trading price of \$1,000 principal amount of such series of notes during the five trading day measuring period ending on the third day immediately preceding the applicable six-month interest period used to determine whether contingent interest must be paid.

Conversion Rights

Holders may surrender notes for conversion into cash and shares of our common stock on or prior to the maturity date only in the following circumstances:

during any fiscal quarter commencing after the date of original issuance of the notes, if the common stock price for at least 20 trading days in the period of 30 consecutive trading days ending on the last trading day of the fiscal quarter preceding the quarter in which the conversion occurs is more than 120% of the Conversion Price in effect on that 30th trading day;

if we have called the particular notes for redemption and the redemption has not yet occurred; or

upon the occurrence of specified corporate transactions described under "Description of the Notes Conversion Rights Conversion Upon Specified Corporate Transactions."

Upon the occurrence of any of the circumstances described above, holders may convert any outstanding notes into cash and shares of our common stock at an initial "Conversion Price" per share of \$14.47. This represents a "Conversion Rate" of approximately 69.1085 shares of common stock per \$1,000 principal amount of notes. Subject to certain exceptions described in "Description of the Notes," once notes are tendered for conversion, the value (the "Conversion Value") of the cash and shares of our common stock, if any, to be received by a holder converting \$1,000 principal amount of the notes will be determined by multiplying the Conversion Rate by the Ten Day Average Closing Stock Price (as defined below). We will deliver the Conversion Value to holders as follows: (1) an amount in cash (the "Principal Return") equal to the lesser of (a) the aggregate Conversion Value of the notes to be converted and (b) the aggregate principal amount of the notes to be converted, (2) if the aggregate Conversion Value of the notes to be converted is greater than the Principal Return, an amount in whole shares (the "Net Shares"), determined as set forth below, equal to such aggregate Conversion Value less the Principal Return (the "Net Share Amount"), and (3) an amount in cash in lieu of any fractional shares of common stock. We will pay the Principal Return and cash in lieu of fractional shares and deliver the Net Shares, if any, as promptly as practicable after

determination of the Net Share Amount. The number of Net Shares to be paid will be determined by dividing the Net Share Amount by the Ten Day Average Closing Stock Price, rounded down to the nearest whole share. The Ten Day Average Closing Stock Price will be the average of the closing per share prices of our common stock on the New York Stock Exchange on the ten consecutive trading days beginning on the second trading day following the day the notes are submitted for conversion.

The Conversion Price will be subject to adjustment in certain circumstances. See "Description of the Notes Conversion Rights Conversion Price Adjustments."

If you elect to convert your notes in connection with certain corporate transactions that occur on or prior to December 15, 2011 that constitute a "change in control," other than a change in control relating to the composition of our board of directors, we will decrease the Conversion Price to increase the Conversion Rate by a number of shares of common stock. See "Description of the Notes Conversion Rights Conversion Upon Specified Corporate Transactions."

If we declare a cash dividend or cash distribution above a specified amount (the "dividend threshold amount") to all of the holders of our common stock, the Conversion Price shall be decreased to equal the price determined by multiplying the Conversion Price in effect immediately prior to the record date for such dividend or distribution by the following fraction:

$$\frac{\text{(Pre-Dividend Sale Price-Dividend Adjustment Amount)}}{\text{(Pre-Dividend Sale Price)}}$$

"Pre-Dividend Sale Price" means the average common stock price for the three consecutive trading days ending on the trading day immediately preceding the record date for such dividend or distribution.

"Dividend Adjustment Amount" means the difference between the full amount of the dividend or distribution to the extent payable in cash applicable to one share of our common stock and the dividend threshold amount.

The "common stock price" on any date means the closing sale price per share (or if no closing sale price is reported, the average of the bid and ask prices or, if more than one in either case, the average of the average bid and the average ask prices) on such date for our common stock as reported in composite transactions on the New York Stock Exchange or such other principal United States securities exchange on which our common stock is then traded or, if our common stock is not listed on a United States national or regional securities exchange, as reported by The Nasdaq System.

A "trading day" means any regular or abbreviated trading day of The New York Stock Exchange.

Upon conversion of the notes, the holder will not receive any additional cash payment representing accrued and unpaid interest, including contingent interest or liquidated damages, if any.

See "Description of the Notes Conversion Rights."

Optional Redemption

We cannot redeem the notes before December 15, 2011. We may redeem some or all of the notes at any time or from time to time on or after December 15, 2011, at a redemption price equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued and unpaid interest (including contingent interest and liquidated damages, if any) up to but not including the date of redemption, payable in cash. See "Description of the Notes Optional Redemption of the Notes."

Repurchase of Notes at the Option of the Holder

Holders may require us to repurchase all or a portion of their notes on December 15, 2011, 2014 and 2019 for a repurchase price equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued and unpaid interest (including contingent interest and liquidated damages, if any) up to but not including the date of repurchase, payable in cash. See "Description of the Notes Repurchase of Notes at the Option of the Holder."

Change in Control

If a change in control, as that term is defined in "Description of the Notes Right to Require Repurchase of Notes Upon a Change in Control," occurs, holders will have the right to require us to repurchase all or a portion of their notes for a period of time after the change in control. The repurchase price will be equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes, plus accrued and unpaid interest (including contingent interest and liquidated damages, if any) up to but not including the date of repurchase, payable in cash.

Sinking Fund

None.

Registration Rights

Pursuant to a registration rights agreement with the initial purchasers of each series of notes, we have filed a shelf registration statement with the SEC with respect to resales of the notes and the shares of our common stock issuable upon conversion of the notes. This prospectus constitutes a part of that registration statement. We filed the registration statement solely to permit the resale of notes and shares of common stock issued upon conversion of those notes, and investors who purchase notes or shares of common stock from selling securityholders in this offering will not be entitled to any registration rights under the registration rights agreement. In addition, under the registration rights agreement, selling securityholders may be required to discontinue the sale or other disposition of notes and shares of common stock issued upon conversion of notes pursuant to the shelf registration statement and to discontinue the use of this prospectus under certain circumstances specified in the registration rights agreement.

Use of Proceeds The selling securityholders will receive all of the net proceeds from the sale of the notes or shares of common stock issued upon conversion of the notes. We will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of any of these securities.

Form of the Notes The notes are in book-entry form and represented by permanent global certificates deposited with, or on behalf of, DTC and registered in the name of a nominee of DTC. Beneficial interests in any of the securities are shown on, and transfers of those beneficial interests are effected only through, records maintained by DTC and its participants. See "Description of Notes Book-Entry System."

Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences We and each holder of the notes agreed in the indenture governing the notes to treat the notes, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, as "contingent payment debt instruments" and to be bound by our application of the U.S. Treasury regulations that govern contingent payment debt instruments. Under such regulations, even if we do not pay any contingent interest on the notes, a U.S. holder (as defined below under "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences") of a note will be required to include interest in its gross income for U.S. federal income tax purposes at a rate of 8%, compounded semi-annually, regardless of whether such owner uses the cash or accrual method of tax accounting. Accordingly, each U.S. holder will recognize taxable income significantly in excess of cash received on the notes while they are outstanding. In addition, any gain recognized by a holder on the sale, exchange, repurchase, redemption, retirement or conversion of a note generally will be ordinary interest income; any loss generally will be ordinary loss to the extent of the interest previously included in income by the holder and, thereafter, capital loss. Prospective holders are urged to consult their tax advisors as to the U.S. federal, state, local or other tax consequences of acquiring, owning and disposing of the notes and common stock into which the notes are convertible. See "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences."

Risk Factors See "Risk Factors" and the other information in, and incorporated by reference into, this prospectus for a discussion of factors you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in the notes.

Trading There is no public market for the notes and we do not intend to apply for listing of the notes on any securities exchange or for quotation of the notes through any automated quotation system. The notes currently trade in the PORTAL Market. However, once the notes are sold under this prospectus, those notes will no longer trade in the PORTAL Market. No assurance can be given that a trading market for the notes will exist or as to the liquidity of any trading market for the notes that may exist.

Listing of Common Stock Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "AEL."

RISK FACTORS

An investment in the securities offered by this prospectus involves a number of risks. You should carefully consider each of the risks described below, together with all of the other information contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus before deciding to invest in the notes. If any of the following risks develop into actual events, our business, financial condition or results of operations could be negatively affected, the market price of your notes or shares of our common stock could decline and you may lose all or part of your investment.

Risks Relating to Our Business

We face competition from companies that have greater financial resources, broader arrays of products, higher ratings and stronger financial performance, which may impair our ability to retain existing customers, attract new customers and maintain our profitability and financial strength.

We operate in a highly competitive industry. Many of our competitors are substantially larger and enjoy substantially greater financial resources, higher ratings by rating agencies, broader and more diversified product lines and more widespread agency relationships. Our annuity products compete with index, fixed rate and variable annuities sold by other insurance companies and also with mutual fund products, traditional bank investments and other retirement funding alternatives offered by asset managers, banks and broker-dealers. Our insurance products compete with those of other insurance companies, financial intermediaries and other institutions based on a number of factors, including premium rates, policy terms and conditions, service provided to distribution channels and policyholders, ratings by rating agencies, reputation and commission structures. While we compete with numerous other companies, we view the following as our most significant competitors:

Allianz Life Insurance of North America;

Midland National Life Insurance Company;

AmerUs Group Co.;

Fidelity & Guaranty Life Insurance Company; and

ING USA Annuity & Life Insurance Company.

Our ability to compete depends in part on product pricing which is driven by our investment performance. We will not be able to accumulate and retain assets under management for our products if our investment results underperform the market or the competition, since such underperformance likely would result in asset withdrawals and reduced sales.

We compete for distribution sources for our products. We believe that our success in competing for distributors depends on factors such as our financial strength, the services we provide to, and the relationships we develop with, these distributors and offering competitive commission structures. Our distributors are generally free to sell products from whichever providers they wish, which makes it important for us to continually offer distributors products and services they find attractive. If our products or services fall short of distributors' needs, we may not be able to establish and maintain satisfactory relationships with distributors of our annuity and life insurance products. Our ability to compete in the past has also depended in part on our ability to develop innovative new products and bring them to market more quickly than our competitors. In order for us to compete in the future, we will need to continue to bring innovative products to market in a timely fashion. Otherwise, our revenues and profitability could suffer.

National banks, with pre-existing customer bases for financial services products, may increasingly compete with insurers, as a result of legislation removing restrictions on bank affiliations with insurers. This legislation, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999, permits mergers that combine commercial banks,

insurers and securities firms under one holding company. Until passage of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, prior legislation had limited the ability of banks to engage in securities-related businesses and had restricted banks from being affiliated with insurance companies. The ability of banks to increase their securities-related business or to affiliate with insurance companies may materially and adversely affect sales of all of our products by substantially increasing the number and financial strength of our potential competitors.

General economic conditions, including changing interest rates and market volatility, affect both the risks and the returns on both our products and our investment portfolio.

The market value of our investments and our investment performance, including yields and realization of gains or losses, may vary depending on economic and market conditions. Such conditions include the shape of the yield curve, the level of interest rates and recognized equity and bond indices, including, without limitation, the S&P 500 Index®, the Dow Jones IndexSM and the NASDAQ-100 Index® (the "Indices"). Interest rate risk is our primary market risk exposure. Substantial and sustained increases and decreases in market interest rates can materially and adversely affect the profitability of our products, our ability to earn predictable returns, the market value of our investments and the reported value of stockholders' equity.

From time to time, for business or regulatory reasons, we may be required to sell certain of our investments at a time when their market value is less than the carrying value of these investments. Rising interest rates may cause declines in the value of our fixed maturity securities. With respect to our available for sale fixed maturity securities, such declines (net of income taxes and certain adjustments for assumed changes in amortization of deferred policy acquisition costs and deferred sales inducements) reduce our reported stockholders' equity and book value per share. We have a portfolio of held for investment securities which consists principally of long duration bonds issued by U.S. government agencies, the value of which is also sensitive to interest rate changes.

We may also have difficulty selling our commercial mortgage loans because they are less liquid than our publicly traded securities. As of December 31, 2004, our commercial mortgage loans represented approximately 12% of the value of our invested assets. If we require significant amounts of cash on short notice, we may have difficulty selling these loans at attractive prices or in a timely manner, or both.

A key component of our net income is the investment spread. A narrowing of investment spreads may adversely affect operating results. Although we have the right to adjust interest crediting rates (referred to as "participation," "asset fee" or "cap" rates for index annuities) on most products, changes to crediting rates may not be sufficient to maintain targeted investment spreads in all economic and market environments. In general, our ability to lower crediting rates is subject to a minimum crediting rate filed with and approved by state regulators. In addition, competition and other factors, including the potential for increases in surrenders and withdrawals, may limit our ability to adjust or maintain crediting rates at levels necessary to avoid the narrowing of spreads under certain market conditions. Our policy structure generally provides for resetting of policy crediting rates at least annually and imposes withdrawal penalties for withdrawals during the first three to 17 years a policy is in force.

Our spreads may be compressed in declining interest rate environments. A substantial portion of our fixed income securities have call features and are subject to redemption currently or in the near future. We have reinvestment risk related to these redemptions to the extent we cannot reinvest the net proceeds in assets with credit quality and yield characteristics similar to or better than those of the redeemed bonds. As indicated above, we have a certain ability to mitigate this risk by lowering interest crediting rates subject to minimum crediting rates in the policy terms.

Managing the investment spread on our index annuities is more complex than it is for fixed rate annuity products. Index products are credited with a percentage (known as the "participation rate") of gains in the Indices. Some of our index products have an annual asset fee which is deducted from the amount credited to the policy. In addition, caps are set on some products to limit the maximum amount which may be credited on a particular product. To fund the earnings to be credited to the index products, we purchase options on the Indices. The price of such options generally increases with increases in the volatility in the Indices and interest rates, which may either narrow the spread or cause us to lower participation rates. Thus, the volatility of the Indices adds an additional degree of uncertainty to the profitability of the index products. We attempt to mitigate this risk by resetting participation rates and asset fees annually and adjusting the applicable caps.

Our investment portfolio is also subject to credit quality risks which may diminish the value of our invested assets and affect our sales, profitability and reported book value per share.

We are subject to the risk that the issuers of our fixed maturity securities and other debt securities (other than our U.S. agency securities), and borrowers on our commercial mortgages, will default on principal and interest payments, particularly if a major downturn in economic activity occurs. At December 31, 2004, 85% of our invested assets consisted of fixed maturity securities, of which 1% were below investment grade. At December 31, 2004, there were no delinquencies in our commercial mortgage loan portfolio. An increase in defaults on our fixed maturity securities and commercial mortgage loan portfolios could harm our financial strength and reduce our profitability. We use derivative instruments to fund the annual credits on our index annuities. We purchase derivative instruments, consisting primarily of one-year call options, from a number of counterparties. Our policy is to acquire such options only from counterparties rated A- or better by a nationally recognized rating agency. If, however, our counterparties fail to honor their obligations under the derivative instruments, we will have failed to provide for crediting to policyholders related to the appreciation in the applicable indices. Any such failure could harm our financial strength and reduce our profitability.

Our reinsurance program involves risks because we remain liable with respect to the liabilities ceded to reinsurers if the reinsurers fail to meet the obligations assumed by them.

Our life insurance subsidiaries cede insurance to other insurance companies through reinsurance. In particular, American Equity Life has entered into two coinsurance agreements with Equitrust Life Insurance Company, or Equitrust, an affiliate of Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company, or Farm Bureau, covering 70% of certain of our fixed rate and index annuities issued from August 1, 2001 through December 31, 2001, 40% of those contracts for 2002 and 2003 and 20% of those contracts issued from January 1, 2004 to July 31, 2004, when the agreement was suspended by mutual consent of the parties. As a result of the suspension, new business is no longer ceded to Equitrust unless and until the parties mutually agree to resume the coinsurance of new business. At December 31, 2004, the aggregate policy benefit reserve transferred to Equitrust was approximately \$2.1 billion. Equitrust has been assigned a financial strength rating of "A" by A.M. Best Company. We remain liable with respect to the policy liabilities ceded to Equitrust should it fail to meet the obligations assumed by it. As of December 31, 2004, Farm Bureau beneficially owned approximately 14.4% of our common stock.

In addition, we have entered into other types of reinsurance transactions including indemnity and financial reinsurance. Should any of these reinsurers fail to meet the obligations assumed under such reinsurance, we remain liable with respect to the liabilities ceded.

We may experience volatility in net income due to accounting standards for derivatives.

The Financial Accounting Standards Board issued Statement of Financial Accounting Standards, or SFAS No. 133, which became effective for us on January 1, 2001. Under SFAS No. 133, as amended, all derivative instruments (including certain derivative instruments embedded in other contracts) are

recognized in the balance sheet at their fair values and changes in fair value are recognized immediately in earnings. This impacts the items of revenue and expense we report on our index business as follows:

We must mark to market the purchased call options we use to fund the annual index credits on our index annuities based upon quoted market prices from related counterparties. We record the change in fair value of these options as a component of our revenues. Included within the change in fair value of the options is an element reflecting the time value of the options, which initially is their purchase cost declining to zero at the end of their one-year lives. The change in fair value of derivatives also includes proceeds received at expiration of the one-year option terms and gains or losses recognized upon early termination. For the years ended December 31, 2004, 2003 and 2002, the change in fair value of derivatives was \$28.7 million, \$52.5 million and \$(57.8) million, respectively.

Under SFAS No. 133, the future annual index credits on our index annuities are treated as a "series of embedded derivatives" over the expected life of the applicable contracts. We are required to estimate the fair value of policy liabilities for index annuities, including the embedded derivatives, by valuing the "host" (or guaranteed) component of the liabilities and projecting (i) the expected index credits on the next policy anniversary dates and (ii) the net cost of annual options we will purchase in the future to fund index credits. Our estimates of the fair value of these embedded derivatives are based on assumptions related to underlying policy terms (including annual participation rates, asset fees, cap rates and minimum guarantees), index values, notional amounts, strike prices and expected lives of the policies. The change in fair value of embedded derivatives generally increases with increases in volatility in the Indices and interest rates. The change in fair value of the embedded derivatives will not correspond to the change in fair value of the purchased options because the purchased options are one-year options while the options valued in the fair value of embedded derivatives cover the expected life of the contracts which typically exceed 10 years. The change in fair value of embedded derivatives included in the consolidated statements of income was \$(8.6) million, \$66.8 million and \$(5.0) million for the years ended December 31, 2004, 2003 and 2002, respectively.

We adjust the amortization of deferred policy acquisition costs and deferred sales inducements to reflect the impact of the two items discussed above. Amortization of deferred policy acquisition costs and deferred sales inducements increased by \$6.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2004, decreased by \$1.7 million for the year ended December 31, 2003 and increased by \$1.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2002.

The application of SFAS No. 133 in future periods to our index annuity business may cause substantial volatility in our reported net income.

If we do not manage our growth effectively, our financial performance could be adversely affected; our historical growth rates may not be indicative of our future growth.

We have experienced rapid growth since our formation in December 1995. For the year ended December 31, 2004, our deposits from sales of new annuities before coinsurance were \$2.0 billion (\$1.8 billion net of coinsurance). Our work force has grown from approximately 65 employees and 4,000 independent agents as of December 31, 1997 to approximately 230 employees and 46,000 independent agents as of December 31, 2004. We intend to continue to grow by recruiting new independent agents, increasing the productivity of our existing agents, expanding our insurance distribution network, developing new products, expanding into new product lines, becoming licensed in all 50 states and continuing to develop new incentives for our sales agents. Future growth will impose significant added responsibilities on our management, including the need to identify, recruit, maintain and integrate additional employees, including management. There can be no assurance that we will be

successful in expanding our business or that our systems, procedures and controls will be adequate to support our operations as they expand. In addition, due to our rapid growth and resulting increased size, it may be necessary to expand the scope of our investing activities to asset classes in which we historically have not invested or have not had significant exposure. If we are unable to adequately manage our investments in these classes, our financial condition or operating results in the future could be less favorable than in the past. Further, although recently deemphasized, we have utilized reinsurance in the past to support our growth. The future availability of reinsurance is uncertain. Our failure to manage growth effectively, or our inability to recruit, maintain and integrate additional qualified employees and independent agents, could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations. In addition, due to our rapid growth, our historical growth rates are not likely to accurately reflect our future growth rates or our growth potential. We cannot assure you that our future revenues will increase or that we will continue to be profitable.

We must retain and attract key employees or else we may not grow or be successful.

We are dependent upon our executive management for the operation and development of our business. Our executive management team includes:

David J. Noble, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, President and Treasurer;\

John M. Matovina, Vice Chairman;

Kevin R. Wingert, President of American Equity Life;

James R. Gerlach, Executive Vice President;

Terry A. Reimer, Executive Vice President;

Debra J. Richardson, Senior Vice President; and

Wendy L. Carlson, General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer.

Although we have change in control agreements with members of our executive management team, we do not have employment contracts with any of the members of our executive management team. Although none of our executive management team has indicated that they intend to terminate their employment with us, there can be no assurance that these employees will remain with us for any particular period of time. Also, we do not maintain "key person" life insurance for any of our personnel.

If we are unable to attract and retain national marketing organizations and independent agents, sales of our products may be reduced.

We distribute our annuity products through a variable cost distribution network which included over 70 national marketing organizations and approximately 46,000 independent agents as of December 31, 2004. We must attract and retain such marketers and agents to sell our products. Insurance companies compete vigorously for productive agents. We compete with other life insurance companies for marketers and agents primarily on the basis of our financial position, support services, compensation and product features. Such marketers and agents may promote products offered by other life insurance companies that may offer a larger variety of products than we do. Our competitiveness for such marketers and agents also depends upon the long-term relationships we develop with them. If we are unable to attract and retain sufficient marketers and agents to sell our products, our ability to compete and our revenues would suffer.

We may require additional capital to support sustained future growth which may not be available when needed or may be available only on unfavorable terms.

Our long-term strategic capital requirements will depend on many factors including the accumulated statutory earnings of our life insurance subsidiaries and the relationship between the statutory capital and surplus of our life insurance subsidiaries and (i) the rate of growth in sales of our products; and (ii) the levels of credit risk and/or interest rate risk in our invested assets. To support long-term capital requirements, we may need to increase or maintain the statutory capital and surplus of our life insurance subsidiaries through additional financings, which could include debt, equity, financial reinsurance and/or other surplus relief transactions. Such financings, if available at all, may be available only on terms that are not favorable to us. If we cannot maintain adequate capital, we may be required to limit growth in sales of new annuity products, and such action could adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Changes in state and federal regulation may affect our profitability.

We are subject to regulation under applicable insurance statutes, including insurance holding company statutes, in the various states in which our life insurance subsidiaries write insurance. Our life insurance subsidiaries are domiciled in New York and Iowa. We are currently licensed to sell our products in 48 states and the District of Columbia. Insurance regulation is intended to provide safeguards for policyholders rather than to protect shareholders of insurance companies or their holding companies.

Regulators oversee matters relating to trade practices, policy forms, claims practices, guaranty funds, types and amounts of investments, reserve adequacy, insurer solvency, minimum amounts of capital and surplus, transactions with related parties, changes in control and payment of dividends.

State insurance regulators and the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, or NAIC, continually reexamine existing laws and regulations, and may impose changes in the future.

Our life insurance subsidiaries are subject to the NAIC's risk-based capital requirements which are intended to be used by insurance regulators as an early warning tool to identify deteriorating or weakly capitalized insurance companies for the purpose of initiating regulatory action. Our life insurance subsidiaries also may be required, under solvency or guaranty laws of most states in which they do business, to pay assessments up to certain prescribed limits to fund policyholder losses or liabilities of insolvent insurance companies.

Although the federal government does not directly regulate the insurance business, federal legislation and administrative policies in several areas, including pension regulation, age and sex discrimination, financial services regulation, securities regulation and federal taxation, can significantly affect the insurance business. As increased scrutiny has been placed upon the insurance regulatory framework, a number of state legislatures have considered or enacted legislative proposals that alter, and in many cases increase, state authority to regulate insurance companies and holding company systems. In addition, legislation has been introduced in Congress which could result in the federal government assuming some role in the regulation of the insurance industry. The regulatory framework at the state and federal level applicable to our insurance products is evolving. The changing regulatory framework could affect the design of such products and our ability to sell certain products. Any changes in these laws and regulations could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Recently, suits have been brought against, and guilty pleas accepted from, participants in the insurance industry alleging certain illegal actions by these participants. Although we do not do business with the parties to the suits or those pleading guilty, are not involved in the suits at all and do not believe that our business practices are of the same nature as those the suits allege to have occurred, we

cannot be certain of what ultimate effect the suits, as well as any increased regulatory oversight that might result from the suits, might have on the insurance industry as a whole, and thus on our business.

Changes in federal income taxation laws, including recent reductions in individual income tax rates, may affect sales of our products and profitability.

The annuity and life insurance products that we market generally provide the policyholder with certain federal income tax advantages. For example, federal income taxation on any increases in the contract values (i.e., the "inside build-up") of these products is deferred until it is received by the policyholder. With other savings investments, such as certificates of deposit and taxable bonds, the increase in value is generally taxed each year as it is realized. Additionally, life insurance death benefits are generally exempt from income tax.

From time to time, various tax law changes have been proposed that could have an adverse effect on our business, including the elimination of all or a portion of the income tax advantages described above for annuities and life insurance. If legislation were enacted to eliminate the tax deferral for annuities, such a change would have an adverse effect on our ability to sell non-qualified annuities. Non-qualified annuities are annuities that are not sold to an individual retirement account or other qualified retirement plan.

In June 2001, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 was enacted, which implemented a staged reduction in individual federal income tax rates that began in 2001. The enactment of the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 accelerated such rate reductions. While the reduction in income tax rates is temporary (the pre-2001 rates will return in 2011), the present value of the tax deferred advantage of annuities and life insurance products is less, which might hinder our ability to sell such products and/or increase the rate at which our current policyholders surrender their policies.

We face risks relating to litigation, including the costs of such litigation, management distraction and the potential for damage awards, which may adversely impact our business.

We are occasionally involved in litigation, both as a defendant and as a plaintiff. In addition, state regulatory bodies, such as state insurance departments, the SEC, the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc., the Department of Labor, and other regulatory bodies regularly make inquiries and conduct examinations or investigations concerning our compliance with, among other things, insurance laws, securities laws, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended, and laws governing the activities of broker-dealers. Companies in the life insurance and annuity business have faced litigation, including class action lawsuits, alleging improper product design, improper sales practices and similar claims. We are currently a defendant in several purported class action lawsuits filed in state courts alleging improper sales practices. In these lawsuits, the plaintiffs are seeking returns of premiums and other compensatory and punitive damages. We have reached a final settlement in one of these cases, the impact of which is expected to be immaterial. The class was certified as such incident to the settlement of the case. No class has been certified in any of the other pending cases at this time. Although we have denied all allegations in the lawsuits and intend to vigorously defend them, the lawsuits are in the early stages of litigation and neither the outcomes nor a range of possible outcomes can be determined at this time. While we do not believe that these lawsuits will have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations, there can be no assurance that such litigation, or any future litigation, will not have such an effect, whether financially, through distraction of our management or otherwise.

A downgrade in our credit or financial strength ratings will likely reduce the market value of the notes and may increase our future cost of capital and may reduce new sales, adversely affect relationships with distributors and increase policy surrenders and withdrawals.

Currently, our senior unsecured indebtedness carries a bb+ rating from A.M. Best and a BB+ rating from Standard & Poor's. Our ability to maintain such ratings is dependent upon the results of operations of our subsidiaries and our financial strength. If we fail to preserve the strength of our balance sheet and to maintain a capital structure that rating agencies deem suitable, it could result in a downgrading of the ratings applicable to our senior unsecured indebtedness, including the notes. A downgrading would likely reduce the market value of the notes and may increase our future cost of capital.

Financial strength ratings are important factors in establishing the competitive position of life insurance and annuity companies. A ratings downgrade, or the potential for a ratings downgrade, could have a number of adverse effects on our business. For example, distributors and sales agents for life insurance and annuity products use the ratings as one factor in determining which insurer's annuities to market. A ratings downgrade could cause those distributors and agents to seek alternative carriers. In addition, a ratings downgrade could materially increase the number of policy or contract surrenders we experience.

Financial strength ratings generally involve quantitative and qualitative evaluations by rating agencies of a company's financial condition and operating performance. Generally, rating agencies base their ratings upon information furnished to them by the insurer and upon their own investigations, studies and assumptions. Ratings are based upon factors of concern to agents, policyholders and intermediaries and are not directed toward the protection of investors and are not recommendations to buy, sell or hold securities.

American Equity Life has received financial strength ratings of "B++" (Very Good) with a stable outlook from A.M. Best Company and "BBB+" with a stable outlook from Standard & Poor's. A.M. Best ratings currently range from "A++" (Superior) to "F" (In Liquidation), and include 16 separate ratings categories. Within these categories, "A++" (Superior) and "A+" (Superior) are the highest, followed by "A" (Excellent), "A-" (Excellent), B++ (Very Good) and B+ (Very Good). Publications of A.M. Best indicate that the "B++" rating is assigned to those companies that, in A.M. Best's opinion, have demonstrated a good ability to meet their ongoing obligations to policyholders. Standard & Poor's insurer financial strength ratings currently range from "AAA" to "NR," and include 21 separate ratings categories. Within these categories, "AAA" and "AA" are the highest, followed by "A" and "BBB". Publications of Standard & Poor's indicate that an insurer rated "BBB" or higher is regarded as having strong financial security characteristics, but is somewhat more likely to be affected by adverse business conditions than are higher rated insurers.

A.M. Best and Standard & Poor's review their ratings of insurance companies from time to time. There can be no assurance that any particular rating will continue for any given period of time or that it will not be changed or withdrawn entirely if, in their judgment, circumstances so warrant. If our ratings were to be downgraded for any reason, we could experience a material decline in the sales of our products and the persistency of our existing business.

Risks Relating to an Investment in the Notes and Our Common Stock

Your right to receive payments on these notes is effectively subordinated to the rights of our existing and future unsubordinated, secured creditors.

The notes are unsecured and therefore are effectively subordinated to all of our existing and future unsubordinated, secured indebtedness to the extent of the value of the assets securing such indebtedness. As a result, in the event of a bankruptcy, liquidation, dissolution, reorganization or

similar proceeding of our company, our assets will be available to satisfy obligations of our unsubordinated, secured debt before any payment may be made on the notes. To the extent that such assets cannot satisfy in full our unsubordinated, secured debt, the holders of such debt would have a claim for any shortfall that would rank equally in right of payment (or effectively senior if the debt were issued by a subsidiary) with the notes. In such an event, we may not have sufficient assets remaining to pay amounts on any or all of the notes.

As of December, 31, 2004, we had no senior unsecured indebtedness other than the notes, no secured indebtedness and \$173.6 million of subordinated indebtedness, which ranks junior in right of payment to the notes.

The notes are junior to the indebtedness of our subsidiaries.

The notes were issued by American Equity Investment Life Holding Company and are structurally subordinated to the existing and future claims of our subsidiaries' creditors. Holders of the notes are not creditors of our subsidiaries. Any claims of holders of the notes to the assets of our subsidiaries derive from our own equity interests in those subsidiaries. Claims of our subsidiaries' creditors will generally have priority as to the assets of our subsidiaries over our own equity interest claims and will therefore have priority over the holders of the notes. Consequently, the notes are effectively subordinate to all liabilities, including policyholder liabilities, trade payables, lease obligations and liquidation preference on any preferred stock, whether or not secured, of any of our subsidiaries and any subsidiaries that we may in future acquire or establish. Our subsidiaries' creditors may also include general creditors and taxing authorities.

As of December 31, 2004, our subsidiaries had total liabilities of approximately \$10.4 billion (including policy benefit reserves of approximately \$9.8 billion).

We continue to have the ability to incur additional debt; if we incur substantial additional debt, these higher levels of debt may affect our ability to pay principal and interest on the notes.

The indenture governing the notes does not restrict our ability to incur additional indebtedness or require us to maintain financial ratios or specified levels of net worth or liquidity. Although our line of credit facility contains restrictions on the incurrence of additional indebtedness and requires us to comply with specific financial ratios and tests, these provisions are subject to a number of qualifications and exceptions, and the indebtedness incurred in compliance with these provisions could be substantial. If we incur substantial additional indebtedness in the future, these higher levels of indebtedness may affect our ability to pay principal and interest on the notes and our creditworthiness generally.

Our ability to meet our payment obligations is dependent upon distributions from our subsidiaries, but our subsidiaries' ability to make distributions is limited by law and several contractual agreements.

We are a holding company and, by virtue of our holding company structure, the notes in effect are junior in right of payment to all existing and future liabilities of our life insurance subsidiaries. Our principal assets are the shares of the capital stock and surplus notes of our life insurance subsidiaries and a note receivable from American Equity Investment Service Company, or the Service Company. As a holding company without independent means of generating operating revenues, we depend on dividends, interest on surplus notes, investment advisory fees and other payments from our life insurance subsidiaries to fund our obligations and meet our cash needs. We also receive principal and interest payments on our note receivable from the Service Company. For a more detailed description of our note receivable from the Service Company, please refer to "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Liquidity of Parent Company" and note 8 to the audited consolidated financial statements in our Annual Report on Form 10-K/A for the year ended December 31, 2004. See "Where You Can Find More Information."

The transfer of funds by American Equity Life is restricted by certain covenants in our line of credit facility which, among other things, requires American Equity Life to maintain a minimum risk-based capital ratio of 200%. Under the most restrictive of these limitations, \$60.9 million of our earned surplus at December 31, 2004 was available for distribution by American Equity Life to the parent company in the form of dividends or other distributions. As of December 31, 2004, there was no amount outstanding under the line of credit facility. However, in the future, we may incur indebtedness under the line of credit facility which restricts the transfer of funds by our life insurance subsidiaries.

The payment of dividends or distributions, including surplus note payments, by our life insurance subsidiaries is subject to regulation by each subsidiary's state of domicile's insurance department. Our life insurance subsidiaries are domiciled in Iowa and New York. Currently, our life insurance subsidiaries may pay dividends or make other distributions without the prior approval of their state of domicile's insurance department, unless such payments, together with all other such payments within the preceding twelve months, exceed, in Iowa, the greater of, and in New York, the lesser of (1) the life insurance subsidiary's net gain from operations for the preceding calendar year, or (2) 10% of the life insurance subsidiary's statutory surplus at the preceding December 31. For 2005, up to approximately \$60.9 million can be distributed as dividends or surplus note payments by American Equity Life without prior approval of the Iowa insurance department. In addition, dividends and surplus note payments may be made only out of earned surplus, and all surplus note payments are subject to prior approval by regulatory authorities in the life insurance subsidiary's state of domicile. American Equity Life had approximately \$114.6 million of earned surplus at December 31, 2004.

In addition, our life insurance subsidiaries are subject to the NAIC's risk-based capital, or RBC, requirements set forth in the Risk-Based Capital for Insurers Model Act, or the Model Act. The main purpose of the Model Act is to provide a tool for insurance regulators to evaluate the capital of insurers relative to the risks assumed by them and determine whether there is a need for possible corrective action. U.S. insurers and reinsurers are required to report the results of their RBC calculations as part of the statutory annual statements filed with state insurance regulatory authorities.

The Model Act provides for four different levels of regulatory actions, each of which may be triggered if an insurer's total adjusted capital, as defined in the Model Act, is less than a corresponding RBC requirement.

The company action level is triggered if an insurer's total adjusted capital is less than 200% of its authorized control level RBC, as defined in the Model Act. At the company action level, the insurer must submit a plan to the regulatory authority that discusses proposed corrective actions to improve its capital position.

The regulatory action level is triggered if an insurer's total adjusted capital is less than 150% of its authorized control level RBC. At the regulatory action level, the regulatory authority will perform a special examination of the insurer and issue an order specifying corrective actions that must be followed.

If an insurer's total adjusted capital is less than its authorized control level RBC, the regulatory authority is authorized (although not mandated) to take regulatory control of the insurer.

The mandatory control level is triggered if an insurer's total adjusted capital is less than 70% of its authorized control level RBC, and at that level the regulatory authority must take regulatory control of the insurer. Regulatory control may lead to rehabilitation or liquidation of an insurer.

As of December 31, 2004, the total adjusted capital of our life insurance subsidiaries exceeded the company action level.

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Although we believe our current sources of funds provide adequate cash flow to us to meet our current and reasonably foreseeable future obligations, there can be no assurance that we will continue to have access to these sources in the future.

Upon conversion of the notes, you may receive less proceeds than expected because the value of our common stock may decline between the day that you exercise your conversion right and the day the value of your shares is determined.

The conversion value that you will receive upon conversion of your notes is in part determined by the average of the closing prices per share of our common stock on the New York Stock Exchange for the ten consecutive trading days beginning on the second trading day immediately following the day the notes are tendered for conversion. Accordingly, if the price of our common stock decreases after you tender your notes for conversion, the conversion value you receive may be adversely affected.

We may be unable to repurchase your notes as required under the indenture upon a change in control or on the specified dates at the option of the holder or pay you cash upon conversion of your notes.

Upon a change in control, as defined in the indenture, and on December 15, 2011, 2014 and 2019, you will have the right to require us to repurchase your notes for cash. In addition, upon conversion of the notes, you will have the right to receive a cash payment. If we do not have sufficient funds to pay the repurchase price for all of the notes you tender upon a change in control, the cash due upon repurchases of the notes on December 15, 2011, 2014 and 2019 or the cash due upon conversion, an event of default under the indenture governing the notes would occur as a result of such failure. In addition, cash payments in respect of notes that you tender for repurchase or that you convert may be subject to limits and might be prohibited, or create an event of default, under our line of credit facility or other agreements relating to borrowings that we may enter into from time to time. Our failure to make cash payments in respect of the notes could result in an event of default under such agreements. Such other borrowings may be secured indebtedness and may prevent us from making cash payments in respect of the notes under certain circumstances. Our inability to pay for your notes that are tendered for repurchase or conversion could result in your receiving substantially less than the principal amount of the notes. See "Description of the Notes Repurchase of Notes at the Option of the Holder" and " Right to Require Repurchase of Notes Upon a Change in Control."

Upon an occurrence of a change of control, we may be required to offer to repay the notes and may be required to repay any other debt then outstanding. If a change in control were to occur, we may not have the financial resources available to repurchase all the notes for cash.

You may have to pay taxes with respect to distributions on our common stock that you do not receive.

The price at which the notes are convertible into shares of common stock is subject to adjustment under certain circumstances such as stock splits and combinations, stock dividends, certain cash dividends and certain other actions by us that modify our capital structure. See "Description of the Notes Conversion Rights Conversion Price Adjustments." If the Conversion Price is adjusted as a result of a distribution that is taxable to our common stockholders, such as a cash dividend, holders of the notes would be required to include an amount in income for U.S. federal income tax purposes, notwithstanding the fact that they do not receive such distribution. In addition, non-U.S. holders (as defined in "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences") of the notes may, in certain circumstances, be deemed to have received a distribution subject to U.S. federal withholding tax requirements, which we may set off against cash payments of interest payable on the notes. Please read "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences."

U.S. holders will recognize income for U.S. federal income tax purposes significantly in excess of current cash payments on the notes.

We and each holder of the notes agreed in the indenture to treat the notes, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, as "contingent payment debt instruments." As a result of such treatment, U.S. holders (as defined below under "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences") of the notes will be required to include interest in gross income significantly in excess of the stated interest on the notes. In addition, any gain recognized by a U.S. holder on the sale, exchange, repurchase, redemption, retirement or conversion of a note generally will be ordinary interest income; any loss generally will be ordinary loss to the extent of the interest previously included in income by the holder and, thereafter, capital loss. There is some uncertainty as to the proper application of the Treasury regulations governing contingent payment debt instruments and, if our treatment is successfully challenged by the Internal Revenue Service, with respect to the series of notes you hold, it might be determined that, among other things, you should have accrued interest income at a lower or higher rate, or should have recognized capital gain or loss, rather than ordinary income or loss, upon the conversion or taxable disposition of such notes. Please read "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences" below.

Our reported earnings per share may be more volatile because of the conversion provision of the notes.

Holders of the notes are entitled to convert the notes prior to their maturity date into cash and shares of our common stock. The Financial Accounting Standards Board's Emerging Issues Task Force (EITF) has reached a final consensus on EITF No. 04-8, "The Effect of Contingently Convertible Debt on Diluted Earnings Per Share," that the dilutive impact of contingently convertible debt instruments should be included in diluted earnings per share upon issuance regardless of whether the conversion contingency has been met. EITF No. 04-8 is effective for reporting periods ending after December 15, 2004. Prior to EITF No. 04-8, the dilutive impact of contingently convertible debt instruments was excluded from diluted earnings per share unless and until the conversion contingency was met. Until our common stock price exceeds the Conversion Price, inclusion of the shares of our common stock underlying the notes in the calculation of diluted earnings per share will not be dilutive. Should our common stock price exceed the Conversion Price, diluted earnings per share would be expected to decrease as a result of including the underlying shares in the diluted earnings per share calculation. Volatility in our common stock price could cause this contingency to be met in one quarter and not in a subsequent quarter, increasing the volatility of diluted earnings per share.

There is no public market for the notes, so if an active trading market does not develop for the notes you may not be able to resell them.

There is no public market for the notes, we do not intend to apply for listing of the notes on any securities exchange or for quotation of the notes on any automated dealer quotation system and we cannot assure you that an active trading market will ever develop for the notes. The notes currently trade on The PORTALSM Market, however, once notes are sold under this prospectus, those notes will no longer trade on The PORTALSM Market.

There can be no assurance that any market for the notes will develop or, if one does develop, that it will be maintained. The lack of a trading market could adversely affect your ability to sell the notes and the price at which you may be able to sell the notes. The liquidity of the trading market, if any, and future trading prices of the notes will depend on many factors, including, among other things, the market price of our common stock, the shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of the notes, prevailing interest rates, our operating results, financial performance and prospects, the market for similar securities and the overall securities market, and may be adversely affected by unfavorable changes in these factors. Historically, the market for convertible debt has been subject to disruptions that have caused volatility in prices. It is possible that the market for the notes will be subject to

disruptions which may have a negative effect on the holders of the notes, regardless of our operating results, financial performance or prospects.

We expect that the trading value of the notes will be significantly affected by the price of our common stock and other factors.

The market price of the notes is expected to be significantly affected by the market price of our common stock. This may result in greater volatility in the trading value of the notes than would be expected for nonconvertible debt securities. In addition, the notes have a number of features, including conditions to conversion, which, if not met, could result in a holder receiving less than the value of our common stock into which a note would otherwise be convertible. These features could adversely affect the value and the trading prices of the notes.

The price of our common stock, and therefore of the notes, may fluctuate significantly, and this may make it difficult for you to resell the notes or the shares of our common stock issuable upon conversion of the notes when you want or at prices you find attractive.

The price of our common stock on the New York Stock Exchange constantly changes. We expect that the market price of our common stock will continue to fluctuate. In addition, because the notes are convertible into our common stock, volatility or depressed prices for our common stock could have a similar effect on the trading price of the notes.

The market price of our common stock may fluctuate in response to numerous factors, many of which are beyond our control. These factors include the following:

actual or anticipated fluctuations in our operating results;

changes in expectations as to our future financial performance, including financial estimates by securities analysts and investors;

the operating and stock performance of our competitors;

announcements by us or our competitors of new products or services or significant contracts, acquisitions, strategic partnerships, joint ventures or capital commitments;

changes in interest rates;

general domestic or international economic, market and political conditions;

additions or departures of key personnel; and

future sales of our common stock.

In addition, the stock markets from time to time experience extreme price and volume fluctuations that may be unrelated or disproportionate to the operating performance of companies. These broad fluctuations may adversely affect the trading price of our common stock, regardless of our actual operating performance.

Future sales of our common stock or equity-related securities in the public market, including sales of our common stock in short sales transactions by purchasers of the notes, could adversely affect the trading price of our common stock and the value of the notes and our ability to raise funds in new stock offerings.

Sales of significant amounts of our common stock or equity-related securities in the public market, or the perception that such sales will occur, could adversely affect prevailing trading prices of our common stock and the value of the notes and could impair our ability to raise capital through future offerings of equity or eq