

CARRIAGE FUNERAL SERVICES OF CALIFORNIA INC

Form 424B3

March 02, 2011

**Table of Contents**

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3)  
Registration No. 333-171711

**Prospectus**

**CARRIAGE SERVICES, INC.**

**\$230,000,000**

**Debt Securities**

**Preferred Stock**

**Common Stock**

**Warrants**

This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a supplement to this prospectus that contains specific information about the offering. The supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should carefully read this prospectus, all prospectus supplements and all other documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus before you invest in our securities. Our common stock is quoted on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol CSV.

THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO SELL SECURITIES UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

**INVESTING IN OUR SECURITIES INVOLVES A HIGH DEGREE OF RISKS. RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH AN INVESTMENT IN OUR SECURITIES WILL BE DESCRIBED IN THE APPLICABLE PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT AND OUR PERIODIC AND OTHER REPORTS WE FILE WITH THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION, AS DESCRIBED IN RISK FACTORS ON PAGE 3. YOU SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER THOSE RISK FACTORS BEFORE INVESTING.**

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 March 2, 2011.

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<u>ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS</u>	
<u>CARRIAGE SERVICES, INC.</u>	1
<u>RISK FACTORS</u>	3
<u>FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS</u>	3
<u>USE OF PROCEEDS</u>	3
<u>RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES</u>	3
<u>DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES</u>	4
<u>DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK</u>	10
<u>DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS</u>	13
<u>PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION</u>	13
<u>LEGAL MATTERS</u>	15
<u>EXPERTS</u>	15
<u>WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION</u>	15
<u>INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE</u>	16

**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS**

This prospectus is part of a shelf registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC. Under this registration statement, we may sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus from time to time in one or more offerings with an aggregate offering price of up to \$230,000,000. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. As permitted by the rules of the SEC, this prospectus does not contain all the information set forth in the registration statement. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a supplement to this prospectus that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. That prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. Before purchasing any securities, you should carefully read both this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, together with the additional information described in this prospectus under the headings **Where You Can Find More Information** and **Incorporation by Reference**.

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus and in any applicable prospectus supplement, including any information incorporated by reference. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. You should not assume that the information appearing in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement or any document incorporated by reference is accurate at any date other than as of the date of each such document. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since the date indicated on the cover page of such documents.

The distribution of this prospectus may be restricted by law in certain jurisdictions. You should inform yourself about and observe these restrictions. This prospectus does not constitute, and may not be used in connection with, an offer or solicitation by anyone in any jurisdiction in which the offer or solicitation is not authorized, or in which the person making the offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so, or to any person to whom it is unlawful to make the offer or solicitation.

When used in this prospectus or in any supplement to this prospectus, the terms Carriage, the Company, we, our and us refer to Carriage Services, Inc. and its subsidiaries, unless otherwise indicated or the context otherwise requires.

---

**Table of Contents**

**CARRIAGE SERVICES, INC.**

We are a leading provider of death care services and merchandise in the United States. We operate two types of businesses: funeral homes, which currently account for approximately 75% of our total revenue, and cemeteries, which currently account for approximately 25% of our total revenue. As of December 31, 2009, we operated 138 funeral homes in 25 states and 32 cemeteries in 11 states. We primarily serve suburban and rural markets, where we primarily compete with non-public, independent operators, and believe we are a market leader (first or second) in most of our markets. We provide funeral and cemetery services and products on both an at-need (time of death) and preneed (planned prior to death) basis.

Our operations are reported in two business segments:

*Funeral Home Operations.* Funeral homes are principally service businesses that provide burial and cremation services and sell related merchandise, such as caskets and urns. Given the high fixed cost structure associated with funeral home operations, we believe the following are key factors affecting our profitability:

demographic trends in terms of population growth and average age, which impact death rates and number of deaths;

establishing and maintaining leading market share positions supported by strong local heritage and relationships;

effectively responding to increasing cremation trends by packaging complimentary service and merchandise;

controlling salary and merchandise costs; and

exercising pricing leverage related to our at-need business to increase average revenues per contract.

*Cemetery Operations.* Cemeteries are primarily a sales business providing interment rights (grave sites and mausoleums) and related merchandise, such as markers and memorials. Our cemetery operating results are impacted by the size and success of our sales organization, as evidenced by the statistic that approximately 57% of our cemetery revenues during the year ended December 31, 2009 was generated from preneed sales of interment rights and related merchandise and services. Cemetery revenues generated from at-need service and merchandise sales generally are subject to many of the same key profitability factors as our funeral home business. Approximately 9% of our cemetery revenues during the year ended December 31, 2009 was attributable to investment earnings on trust funds and finance charges on installment contracts. Changes in the capital markets and interest rates affect this component of our cemetery revenues.

Our business strategy is based on strong, local leadership and entrepreneurial principles that we believe drive market share, revenue growth, and profitability in our local markets. To date, our Standards Operating Model has driven significant changes in our organization, leadership and operating practices. We use the Standards Operating Model to measure the sustainable revenue growth and earning power of our portfolio of deathcare businesses. The standards based model emphasizes growing market share and improving long-term profitability by employing leadership and entrepreneurial principles that fit the nature of our local, personal service, high value business. This model also requires our local and corporate leaders to change our focus from short-term profitability to the drivers of success that create long-term profitability and value for our stockholders. Our operating model emphasizes:

decentralized management of our local businesses;

financial and operational standards based upon key drivers of success of our best businesses;

variable compensation that rewards our managers as if they were owners;

finding, developing and retaining the best people in our industry; and

**Table of Contents**

information technology designed to support local businesses and corporate management decisions, measure performance of our businesses against our financial and operational standards, and ensure adherence to established internal control procedures.

Our business objectives include:

growing market share, creating new heritage, producing consistent, modest revenue growth and increasing sustainable earnings and cash flow;

continuing to improve our operating and financial performance by executing our Standards Operating Model;

upgrading the leadership in our businesses, as necessary; and

executing our Strategic Acquisition Model, a disciplined program that will guide our acquisition strategies, to expand the sustainable earning power profile of our portfolio.

Additional information concerning our business and operations is incorporated by reference herein from our other filings made with the Securities and Exchange Commission and may be included in applicable prospectus supplements and any pricing supplements.

Our corporate offices are located at 3040 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 300, Houston, Texas 77056, and our telephone number is (713) 332-8400.

**Table of Contents**

**RISK FACTORS**

Investment in our securities subjects a shareholder to uncertainties and risks. Investors should carefully consider and evaluate all of the information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, including the risk factors described in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K, financial statements and related notes updated by our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, as well as other SEC filings filed after such annual report. Our business, financial condition, liquidity or results of operations have the potential to be materially adversely affected if any of the risks were to actually occur.

**FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS**

Certain matters discussed in this prospectus, except for historical information contained here but including the information we incorporate by reference, are forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act). When used in this prospectus, words such as anticipates, believes, expects, estimates, intends, plans, similar expressions, as they relate to our Company or management, identify forward-looking statement. These statements include any projections of earnings, revenues, asset sales, cash flow, debt levels or other financial items; any statements of the plans, strategies and objectives of management for future operation; any statements regarding future economic conditions or performance; any statements of belief; and any statements of assumptions underlying any of the foregoing. These statements are based on certain assumptions made by us based on management's experience and perception of historical trends, industry conditions, market position, future operations, profitability, liquidity, capital resources and other factors believed to be appropriate. Management's expectations and assumptions regarding our operations and other anticipated future developments are subject to risks, uncertainties and other factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from the anticipated results or other expectations expressed in the forward-looking statements. Although we believe that the expectations reflected in such statements are reasonable, there is no assurance that such expectations will be correct. All of our forward-looking statements, whether written or oral, are expressly qualified by these cautionary statements and any other cautionary statements that may accompany such forward-looking statements. In addition, we disclaim any obligation to update any forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances after the date of this prospectus.

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement or any pricing supplement, we expect to use the net proceeds generated from the sale of securities offered by this prospectus for general corporate purposes. General corporate purposes include the repayment or refinancing of debt, acquisitions and other capital requirements.

**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

The following table presents our historical ratio of earnings to fixed charges for the periods shown:

Nine Months Ended September 30, 2010	2009	Year Ended December 31,			2005
		2008	2007	2006	

Ratio of earnings to fixed charges	1.67	1.60	1.18	1.62	1.29	*
------------------------------------	------	------	------	------	------	---

For purposes of computing the ratio of earnings to fixed charges: (i) earnings consist of income before provision for income taxes plus fixed charges (excluding capitalized interest) and (ii) fixed charges consist of interest expensed and capitalized, amortization of debt discount and expense relating to indebtedness and the portion of rental expense representative of the interest factor attributable to leases for rental property. There were no dividends paid or accrued on our common stock during the periods presented above. In 2005, fixed charges exceeded earnings by \$1,965,000.

**Table of Contents**

**DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES**

The debt securities of Carriage covered by this prospectus will be our general unsecured obligations. We will issue senior debt securities on a senior unsecured basis under one or more separate indentures between us, one or more of our subsidiaries, if any, that may be guarantors (the **Subsidiary Guarantors** ) and a trustee that we will name in the prospectus supplement. We refer to any such indenture as a senior indenture. We will issue subordinated debt securities under one or more separate indentures between us, the **Subsidiary Guarantors**, if any, and a trustee that we will name in the prospectus supplement. We refer to any such indenture as a subordinated indenture. We refer to the senior indentures and the subordinated indentures collectively as the indentures. The indentures will be substantially identical, except for provisions relating to subordination. The senior debt securities will constitute senior debt and will rank equally with all of our unsecured and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated debt securities will be subordinated to, and thus have a junior position to, the senior debt of Carriage (as defined with respect to the series of subordinated debt securities) and may rank equally with or senior or junior to our other subordinated debt that may be outstanding from time to time.

We have summarized material provisions of the indentures, the debt securities and the guarantees below. This summary is not complete. We have incorporated by reference the form of senior indenture and the form of subordinated indenture with the SEC as exhibits to the registration statement, and you should read the indentures for provisions that may be important to you. Please read **Where You Can Find More Information**.

In this summary description of the debt securities, unless we state otherwise or the context clearly indicates otherwise, all references to Carriage mean Carriage Services, Inc. only and do not include its subsidiaries.

**Provisions Applicable to Each Indenture**

The indentures do not limit the amount of debt securities that may be issued under that indenture, and do not limit the amount of other unsecured debt or securities that Carriage may issue. Carriage may issue debt securities under the indentures from time to time in one or more series, each in an amount authorized prior to issuance. The indentures also give us the ability to reopen a previous issue of a series of debt securities and issue additional debt securities of that series.

Carriage conducts substantially all of its operations through subsidiaries, and those subsidiaries generate substantially all its operating income and cash flow. As a result, distributions or advances from those subsidiaries are the principal source of funds necessary to meet the debt service obligations of Carriage. Contractual provisions or laws, as well as the subsidiaries' financial condition and operating requirements, may limit the ability of Carriage to obtain cash from its subsidiaries that it requires to pay its debt service obligations, including any payments required to be made under the debt securities. In addition, holders of the debt securities will have a junior position to the claims of creditors of the subsidiaries of Carriage on their assets and earnings, to the extent Carriage's subsidiaries do not guarantee the debt securities.

The indentures do not contain any covenants or other provisions designed to protect holders of the debt securities in the event Carriage participates in a highly leveraged transaction or upon a change of control. The indentures also do not contain provisions that give holders the right to require Carriage to repurchase its securities in the event of a decline in Carriage's credit ratings for any reason, including as a result of a takeover, recapitalization or similar restructuring or otherwise.

*Terms.* The prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities being offered will include specific terms relating to the offering. These terms will include some or all of the following:

whether the debt securities will be senior or subordinated debt securities;

the title of the debt securities;

the total principal amount of the debt securities;

**Table of Contents**

whether the debt securities will be issued in individual certificates to each holder or in the form of temporary or permanent global securities held by a depository on behalf of holders;

the date or dates on which the principal of and any premium on the debt securities will be payable;

any interest rate, the date from which interest will accrue, interest payment dates and record dates for interest payments;

any right to extend or defer the interest payment periods and the duration of the extension;

whether and under what circumstances any additional amounts with respect to the debt securities will be payable;

whether the debt securities are entitled to a guarantee of any Subsidiary Guarantors;

the place or places where payments on the debt securities will be payable;

any provisions for optional redemption or early repayment;

the denominations in which the debt securities will be issued, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and integral multiples thereof;

any changes or additions to the events of default or covenants described in this prospectus;

any restrictions or other provisions relating to the transfer or exchange of debt securities;

any terms for the conversion or exchange of the debt securities for other securities of Carriage or any other entity;

with respect to any subordinated indenture, any changes to the subordination provisions for the subordinated debt securities; and

any other terms of the debt securities not prohibited by the applicable indenture.

Carriage may sell the debt securities at a discount, which may be substantial, below their stated principal amount. These debt securities may bear no interest or interest at a rate that at the time of issuance is below market rates. If Carriage sells these debt securities, we will describe in the prospectus supplement any material United States federal income tax consequences and other special considerations.

*Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets or any Subsidiary Guarantors.* Unless we inform you otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the indentures generally permit a consolidation or merger between Carriage or any Subsidiary Guarantor and another entity. They also permit Carriage or any Subsidiary Guarantors to sell, lease, convey, transfer or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of their assets. Carriage and any Subsidiary Guarantors have agreed, however, that they will not consolidate with or merge into any entity or sell, lease, convey, transfer or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of their assets to any entity unless:

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no default or event of default would occur and be continuing or would result from the transaction; and

if Carriage or the Subsidiary Guarantor, as the case may be, is not the continuing entity, the resulting entity or transferee is organized and existing under the laws of any United States jurisdiction and assumes the due and punctual payments on the debt securities and the performance of its covenants and obligations under the indenture and the debt securities.

Upon any such consolidation or merger in which Carriage is not the continuing entity or any such asset sale, lease, conveyance, transfer or disposition involving Carriage, the resulting entity or transferee will be substituted for Carriage under the applicable indenture and debt securities. In the case of an asset sale, conveyance, transfer or disposition other than a lease, Carriage will be released from the applicable indenture.

**Table of Contents**

*Events of Default.* Unless we inform you otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the following are events of default with respect to a series of debt securities:

failure to pay interest when due on that series of debt securities for 30 days;

failure to pay principal of or any premium on that series of debt securities when due;

failure to comply with any covenant or agreement in that series of debt securities or the applicable indenture (other than an agreement or covenant that has been included in the indenture solely for the benefit of one or more other series of debt securities) for 90 days after written notice by the trustee or by the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities issued under that indenture that are affected by that failure;

specified events involving bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of Carriage Services, Inc. or any Subsidiary Guarantor, if such Subsidiary Guarantor is a guarantor with respect to that series of debt securities and it is a significant subsidiary as defined in Article I, Rule 1-02 of Regulation S-X promulgated under the Securities Act of 1933;

specified events involving the subsidiary guarantees; and

any other event of default provided for that series of debt securities.

A default under one series of debt securities will not necessarily be a default under another series. The indentures provide that the trustee generally must mail notice of a default or event of default of which it has actual knowledge to the registered holders of the applicable debt securities within 90 days of occurrence. However, the trustee may withhold notice to the holders of the debt securities of any default or event of default (except in any payment on the debt securities) if the trustee considers it in the interest of the holders of the debt securities to do so.

If an event of default relating to certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occurs, the principal of and interest on all the debt securities issued under the applicable indenture will become immediately due and payable without any action on the part of the trustee or any holder. If any other event of default for any series of debt securities occurs and is continuing, the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the series affected by the default (or, in some cases, 25% in principal amount of all debt securities issued under the applicable indenture that are affected, voting as one class) may declare the principal of and all accrued and unpaid interest on those debt securities immediately due and payable. The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the series affected by the event of default (or, in some cases, of all debt securities issued under the applicable indenture that are affected, voting as one class) may in some cases rescind this accelerated payment requirement.

A holder of a debt security of any series issued under an indenture may pursue any remedy under that indenture only if:

the holder gives the trustee written notice of a continuing event of default for that series;

the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series make a written request to the trustee to pursue the remedy;

the holders offer to the trustee indemnity satisfactory to the trustee;

the trustee fails to act for a period of 60 days after receipt of the request and offer of indemnity; and

during that 60-day period, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the debt securities of that series do not give the trustee a direction inconsistent with the request.

This provision does not, however, affect the right of a holder of a debt security to sue for enforcement of any overdue payment.

**Table of Contents**

In most cases, holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series (or of all debt securities issued under the applicable indenture that are affected, voting as one class) may direct the time, method and place of:

with respect to debt securities of a series, conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee and exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee relating to or arising as a result of specified events of default; or

with respect to all debt securities issued under the applicable indenture that are affected, conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee and exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee relating to or arising other than as a result of such specified events of default.

The trustee, however, may refuse to follow any such direction that conflicts with law or the indentures, is unduly prejudicial to the rights of other holders of the debt securities, or would involve the trustee in personal liability. In addition, prior to acting at the direction of holders, the trustee will be entitled to be indemnified by those holders against any loss and expenses caused thereby.

The indentures require Carriage to file each year with the trustee a written statement as to its compliance with the covenants contained in the applicable indenture.

*Modification and Waiver.* Each indenture may be amended or supplemented if the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of all series issued under that indenture that are affected by the amendment or supplement (acting as one class) consent to it. Without the consent of the holder of each debt security issued under the indenture and affected, however, no modification to that indenture may:

reduce the amount of debt securities whose holders must consent to an amendment, supplement or waiver;

reduce the rate of or change the time for payment of interest on the debt security;

reduce the principal of the debt security or change its stated maturity;

reduce any premium payable on the redemption of the debt security or change the time at which the debt security may or must be redeemed;

change any obligation to pay additional amounts on the debt security;

make payments on the debt security payable in currency other than as originally stated in the debt security;

impair the holder's right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment on the debt security;

make any change in the percentage of principal amount of debt securities necessary to waive compliance with certain provisions of the indenture or to make any change in the provision related to modification;

with respect to the subordinated indenture, modify the provisions relating to the subordination of any subordinated debt security in a manner adverse to the holder of that security; or

waive a continuing default or event of default regarding any payment on the debt securities.

Each indenture may be amended or supplemented or any provision of that indenture may be waived without the consent of any holders of debt securities issued under that indenture in certain circumstances, including:

to cure any ambiguity, omission, defect or inconsistency;

to provide for the assumption of the obligations under the indenture of Carriage by a successor upon any merger or consolidation or asset sale, lease, conveyance, transfer or other disposition of all or substantially all of our assets, in each case as permitted under the indenture;

**Table of Contents**

to provide for uncertificated debt securities in addition to or in place of certificated debt securities or to provide for bearer debt securities;

to provide any security for, any guarantees of or any additional obligors on any series of debt securities;

to comply with any requirement to effect or maintain the qualification of that indenture under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939;

to add covenants that would benefit the holders of any debt securities or to surrender any rights Carriage has under the indenture;

to add events of default with respect to any debt securities;

to make any change that does not adversely affect any outstanding debt securities of any series issued under that indenture in any material respect; provided, that any change made solely to conform the provisions of the indenture to a description of debt securities in a prospectus supplement will not be deemed to adversely affect any outstanding debt securities of any series issued under that indenture in any material respect; and

to supplement the provisions of an indenture to permit or facilitate defeasance or discharge of securities that does not adversely affect any outstanding debt securities of any series issued under that indenture in any material respect.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series (or, in some cases, of all debt securities issued under the applicable indenture that are affected, voting as one class) may waive any existing or past default or event of default with respect to those debt securities. Those holders may not, however, waive any default or event of default in any payment on any debt security or compliance with a provision that cannot be amended or supplemented without the consent of each holder affected.

*Governing Law.* New York law will govern the indentures, the debt securities and the guarantees.

*Trustee.* If an event of default occurs under an indenture and is continuing, the trustee under that indenture will be required to use the degree of care and skill of a prudent person in the conduct of that person's own affairs. The trustee will become obligated to exercise any of its powers under that indenture at the request of any of the holders of any debt securities issued under that indenture only after those holders have offered the trustee indemnity satisfactory to it.

Each indenture contains limitations on the right of the trustee, if it becomes a creditor of Carriage or any Subsidiary Guarantor, if applicable, to obtain payment of claims or to realize on certain property received for any such claim, as security or otherwise. The trustee is permitted to engage in other transactions with Carriage or any Subsidiary Guarantor, if applicable. If, however, it acquires any conflicting interest, it must eliminate that conflict or resign within 90 days after ascertaining that it has a conflicting interest and after the occurrence of a default under the applicable indenture, unless the default has been cured, waived or otherwise eliminated within the 90-day period.

*Form, Exchange, Registration and Transfer.* The debt securities will be issued in registered form, without interest coupons. There will be no service charge for any registration of transfer or exchange of the debt securities. However, payment of any transfer tax or similar governmental charge payable for that registration may be required.

Debt securities of any series will be exchangeable for other debt securities of the same series, the same total principal amount and the same terms but in different authorized denominations in accordance with the applicable indenture.

Holders may present debt securities for registration of transfer at the office of the security registrar or any transfer agent Carriage designates. The security registrar or transfer agent will effect the transfer or exchange if its requirements and the requirements of the applicable indenture are met.

The trustee will be appointed as security registrar for the debt securities. If a prospectus supplement refers to any transfer agents Carriage initially designates, Carriage may at any time rescind that designation or

**Table of Contents**

approve a change in the location through which any transfer agent acts. Carriage is required to maintain an office or agency for transfers and exchanges in each place of payment. Carriage may at any time designate additional transfer agents for any series of debt securities.

In the case of any redemption, Carriage will not be required to register the transfer or exchange of:

any debt security during a period beginning 15 business days prior to the mailing of any notice of redemption or mandatory offer to repurchase and ending on the close of business on the day of mailing of such notice; or

any debt security that has been called for redemption in whole or in part, except the unredeemed portion of any debt security being redeemed in part.

*Payment and Paying Agent.* Unless we inform you otherwise in a prospectus supplement, payments on the debt securities will be made in U.S. dollars at the office of the trustee and any paying agent. At Carriage's option, however, payments may be made by wire transfer for global debt securities or by check mailed to the address of the person entitled to the payment as it appears in the security register. Unless we inform you otherwise in a prospectus supplement, interest payments will be made to the person in whose name the debt security is registered at the close of business on the record date for the interest payment.

Unless we inform you otherwise in a prospectus supplement, the trustee under the applicable indenture will be designated as the paying agent for payments on debt securities issued under that indenture. Carriage may at any time designate additional paying agents or rescind the designation of any paying agent or approve a change in the office through which any paying agent acts.

If the principal of or any premium or interest on debt securities of a series is payable on a day that is not a business day, the payment will be made on the next succeeding business day as if made on the date that the payment was due and no interest will accrue on that payment for the period from and after the due date to the date of that payment on the next succeeding business date. For these purposes, unless we inform you otherwise in a prospectus supplement, a business day is any day that is not a Saturday, a Sunday or a day on which banking institutions in any of New York, New York; Houston, Texas or a place of payment on the debt securities of that series is authorized or obligated by law, regulation or executive order to remain closed.

Subject to the requirements of any applicable abandoned property laws, the trustee and paying agent will pay to us upon written request any money held by them for payments on the debt securities that remains unclaimed for two years after the date upon which that payment has become due. After payment to us, holders entitled to the money must look to us for payment. In that case, all liability of the trustee or paying agent with respect to that money will cease.

*Notices.* Any notice required by the indentures to be provided to holders of the debt securities will be given by mail to the registered holders at the addresses as they appear in the security register.

*Replacement of Debt Securities.* Carriage will replace any debt securities that become mutilated, destroyed, stolen or lost at the expense of the holder upon delivery to the trustee of the mutilated debt securities or evidence of the loss, theft or destruction satisfactory to Carriage and the trustee. In the case of a lost, stolen or destroyed debt security, indemnity satisfactory to the trustee and Carriage may be required at the expense of the holder of the debt securities before a replacement debt security will be issued.

*Book-Entry Debt Securities.* The debt securities of a series may be issued in the form of one or more global debt securities that would be deposited with a depository or its nominee identified in the prospectus supplement. Global debt securities may be issued in either temporary or permanent form. We will describe in the prospectus supplement

the terms of any depositary arrangement and the rights and limitations of owners of beneficial interests in any global debt security.

**Provisions Applicable Solely to Subordinated Debt Securities**

Under the subordinated indenture, payment of the principal of and any premium and interest on the subordinated debt securities will generally be subordinated and junior in right of payment to the prior payment

## **Table of Contents**

in full of all Senior Debt, as described below. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, Carriage may not make any payment of principal of or any premium or interest on the subordinated debt securities if it fails to pay the principal, interest, premium or any other amounts on any Senior Debt when due.

The subordination does not affect Carriage's obligation, which is absolute and unconditional, to pay, when due, the principal of and any premium and interest on the subordinated debt securities. In addition, the subordination does not prevent the occurrence of any default under the subordinated indenture.

The subordinated indenture does not limit the amount of Senior Debt that Carriage may incur. As a result of the subordination of the subordinated debt securities, if Carriage becomes insolvent, holders of subordinated debt securities may receive less on a proportionate basis than other creditors.

Unless we inform you otherwise in a prospectus supplement, Senior Debt will mean all debt, including guarantees, of Carriage, unless the debt states that it is not senior to the subordinated debt securities or other junior debt of Carriage. Senior Debt with respect to a series of subordinated debt securities could include other series of debt securities issued under a subordinated indenture.

## **GUARANTEE**

The Subsidiary Guarantors may fully and unconditionally guarantee on an unsecured basis the full and prompt payment of the principal of and any premium and interest on the debt securities issued by Carriage when and as the payment becomes due and payable, whether at maturity or otherwise. The guarantee provides that in the event of a default in the payment of principal of or any premium or interest on a debt security, the holder of that debt security may institute legal proceedings directly against the applicable Subsidiary Guarantor to enforce the guarantee without first proceeding against Carriage. If senior debt securities are so guaranteed, the guarantee will rank equally with all of the Subsidiary Guarantor's other unsecured and unsubordinated debt from time to time outstanding and senior to any subordinated debt of the Subsidiary Guarantor. If subordinated debt securities are so guaranteed, the guarantee will be subordinated to all of the Subsidiary Guarantor's other unsecured and unsubordinated debt from time to time outstanding.

The obligations of any Subsidiary Guarantor under the guarantee will be limited to the maximum amount that will not result in the obligations of the Subsidiary Guarantor under the guarantee constituting a fraudulent conveyance or fraudulent transfer under federal or state law, after giving effect to any other contingent and fixed liabilities of the Subsidiary Guarantor.

The guarantee may be released under certain circumstances. If no default has occurred and is continuing under the indentures, and to the extent not otherwise prohibited by the indentures, any Subsidiary Guarantor will be unconditionally released and discharged from the guarantee:

automatically upon any sale, exchange or transfer, whether by way of merger or otherwise, to any person that is not an affiliate of Carriage, of all of Carriage's equity interests in the Subsidiary Guarantor;

automatically upon the merger of the Subsidiary Guarantor into Carriage or the liquidation and dissolution of the Subsidiary Guarantor; or

following delivery of a written notice by Carriage to the trustee, upon the release of all guarantees by the Subsidiary Guarantor of any debt of Carriage's for borrowed money, except for any series of debt securities.

## **DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK**

**General**

We are authorized to issue 80,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$.01, of which 18,139,859 shares were issued and outstanding as of February 28, 2011, and 40,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$.01, of which 20,000 shares were issued and outstanding as of February 28, 2011. Our common stock

## **Table of Contents**

is quoted on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol CSV. The following description of our capital stock is based on our certificate of incorporation and bylaws, as amended and currently in effect.

### **Common Stock**

The holders of common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held on all matters submitted to a vote of common stockholders. The common stock does not have cumulative voting rights, which means that the holders of a majority of the voting power of shares of common stock outstanding can elect all the directors, and the holders of the remaining shares will not be able to elect any directors. Each share of common stock is entitled to participate equally in dividends, if, as and when declared by the Company's Board of Directors, and in the distribution of assets in the event of liquidation, subject in all cases to any prior rights of outstanding shares of preferred stock outstanding. The shares of common stock have no preemptive rights, redemption rights or sinking fund provisions. All outstanding shares of common stock are duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable.

### **Preferred Stock**

Our preferred stock may be issued in series, and shares of each series will have such rights and preferences as may be fixed by our board of directors in the resolution authorizing the issuance of that particular series. In designating any series of preferred stock, our board of directors has the authority, without further action by the holders of our common stock, to fix the rights, dividend rate, conversion rights, rights and terms of redemption, and the liquidation preferences of that series of preferred stock.

The prospectus supplement relating to any series of preferred stock we are offering will include specific terms relating to the offering. We will file the form of the preferred stock with the SEC before we issue any of it, and you should read it for provisions that may be important to you. The prospectus supplement will include some or all of the following terms:

the title of the preferred stock;

the maximum number of shares of the series;

the dividend rate or the method of calculating the dividend, the date from which dividends will accrue and whether dividends will be cumulative;

any liquidation preference;

any optional redemption provisions;

any terms for the conversion or exchange of the preferred stock for other securities of us or any other entity;

any voting rights; and

any other preferences and relative, participating, optional or other special rights or any qualifications, limitations or restrictions on the rights of the shares,

The issuance of preferred stock by us could adversely affect the voting power of holders of our common stock and the likelihood that such holders will receive dividend payments and payments upon liquidation and could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of us.

**Delaware Anti-Takeover Law and Charter and By-Law Provisions**

The Company is a Delaware corporation and is subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law. In general, Section 203 prevents an interested stockholder (defined generally as a person owning 15% or more of the Company's outstanding voting stock) from engaging in a business combination (as defined in Section 203) with the Company for three years following the date that person becomes an interested stockholder unless (a) before that person became an interested stockholder, the Company's Board of Directors approved the transaction in which the interested stockholder became an interested stockholder or

**Table of Contents**

approved the business combination; (b) upon completion of the transaction that resulted in the interested stockholder becoming an interested stockholder, the interested stockholder owns at least 85% of the voting stock outstanding at the time the transaction commenced (excluding stock held by directors who are also officers of the Company and by employee stock plans that do not provide employees with the right to determine confidentially whether shares held subject to the plan will be tendered in a tender or exchange offer); or (c) following the transaction in which that person became an interested stockholder, the business combination is approved by the Company's Board of Directors and authorized at a meeting of stockholders by the affirmative vote of the holders of at least two-thirds of the outstanding voting stock not owned by the interested stockholder.

Under Section 203, these restrictions also do not apply to certain business combinations proposed by an interested stockholder following the announcement or notification of one of certain extraordinary transactions involving the Company and a person who was not an interested stockholder during the previous three years or who became an interested stockholder with the approval of a majority of the Company's directors, if that extraordinary transaction is approved or not opposed by a majority of the directors who were directors before any person became an interested stockholder in the previous three years or who were recommended for election or elected to succeed such directors by a majority of such directors then in office.

The Company's Board of Directors is divided into three classes. The directors of each class are elected for three-year terms, with the terms of the three classes staggered so that directors from a single class are elected at each annual meeting of stockholders. Stockholders may remove a director only for cause upon the vote of holders of at least 80% of voting power of the outstanding shares of common stock. In general, the Board of Directors, not the stockholders, has the right to appoint persons to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors.

The Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation dated July 2, 1996, as amended, (the Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation and amendments thereto are herein collectively called the Charter) provides that special meetings of holders of common stock may be called only by the Company's Board of Directors and that only such business proposed by the Board of Directors may be considered at special meetings of holders of common stock.

The Charter provides that the only business (including election of directors) that may be considered at an annual meeting of holders of common stock, in addition to business proposed (or persons nominated to be directors) by the directors of the Company, is business proposed (or persons nominated to be directors) by holders of common stock who comply with the notice and disclosure requirements set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation. In general, the Charter requires that a stockholder give the Company notice of proposed business or nominations no later than 60 days before the annual meeting of holders of common stock (meaning the date on which the meeting is first scheduled and not postponements or adjournments thereof) or (if later) ten days after the first public notice of the annual meeting is sent to holders of common stock. In general, the notice must also contain information about the stockholder proposing the business or nomination, the stockholder's interest in the business, and (with respect to nominations for director) information about the nominee of the nature ordinarily required to be disclosed in public proxy solicitation statements. The stockholder also must submit a notarized letter from each of the stockholder's nominees stating the nominee's acceptance of the nomination and indicating the nominee's intention to serve as director if elected.

The Delaware General Corporation Law provides generally that the affirmative vote of a majority of the shares entitled to vote on any matter is required to amend a corporation's certificate of incorporation or bylaws, unless the corporation's certificate of incorporation or bylaws requires a greater percentage. The Charter provides that approval by the holders of at least 66.67% of the voting power of the outstanding voting stock of the Company is required to amend the provisions of the Charter previously discussed and certain other provisions.



**Table of Contents**

**DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS**

We may issue warrants to purchase any combination of senior or subordinated debt securities, common stock, preferred stock or other securities. Securities warrants may be issued independently or together with debt securities, preferred stock or common stock and may be attached to or separate from any offered securities. We will issue warrants under one or more warrant agreements between us and a warrant agent that we will name in the applicable prospectus supplement or any pricing supplement.

The prospectus supplement (or the pricing supplement) relating to any warrants we are offering will include specific terms relating to the offering. We will file the form of any warrant agreement with the SEC, and you should read the warrant agreement for provisions that may be important to you. The terms of the prospectus supplement (or pricing supplement) may include:

the title of the warrants;

the aggregate number of warrants offered;

the price or prices at which the warrants will be issued;

the currency or currencies in which the price of such warrants may be payable;

the dates or periods during which the warrants are exercisable;

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

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

a discussion of the material United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the warrants;

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

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

**PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION**

We may sell the securities in and outside the United States through underwriters or dealers, directly to purchasers or through agents or through a combination of any of these methods. The prospectus supplement (or a pricing supplement) will include the following information:

the terms of the offering;

the names of any underwriters or agents;

the purchase price of the securities from us;

the net proceeds to us from the sale of securities;

any delayed delivery arrangements;

any underwriting discounts, commissions and other items constituting underwriters' compensation;

any initial public offering price;

any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers; and

any commissions paid to agents.

**Sale Through Underwriters or Dealers**

If we use underwriters in the sale of securities, the underwriters will acquire the securities for their own account. The underwriters may resell the securities from time to time in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions, at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at or prior to the time

## **Table of Contents**

of sale, including at prevailing market prices or at prices related to prevailing market prices. Underwriters may offer securities to the public either through underwriting syndicates represented by one or more managing underwriters or directly by one or more firms acting as underwriters. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, the obligations of the underwriters to purchase the securities will be subject to conditions, and the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all the offered securities if they purchase any of them. The underwriters may change from time to time any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers.

During and after an offering through underwriters, the underwriters may purchase and sell the securities in the open market. These transactions may include overallotment and stabilizing transactions and purchases to cover syndicate short positions created in connection with the offering. The underwriters also may impose a penalty bid, which means that selling concessions allowed to syndicate members or other broker-dealers for the offered securities sold for their account may be reclaimed by the syndicate if the offered securities are repurchased by the syndicate in stabilizing or covering transactions. These activities may stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the offered securities, which may be higher than the price that might otherwise prevail in the open market. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue these activities at any time.

If we use dealers in the sale of securities, we will sell the securities to them as principals. They may then resell those securities to the public at varying prices determined by the dealers at the time of resale. The dealers participating in any sale of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of those securities. We will include in the prospectus supplement the names of the dealers and the terms of the transaction.

Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Rule 5110 requires FINRA members firms (unless an exemption applies) to satisfy the filing requirements of Rule 5110 in connection with the sale of the securities included in this Registration Statement on a principal or agency basis. FINRA Notice to Members 88-101 states that in the event any securities are to be sold under this prospectus through a member of FINRA participating in a distribution of our securities, such member is responsible for insuring that a timely filing, if required, is first made with the Corporate Finance Department of FINRA and disclosing to FINRA the following:

it intends to take possession of the registered securities or to facilitate the transfer of such certificates;

the complete details of how the securities are and will be held, including location of the particular accounts;

whether the member firm or any direct or indirect affiliates thereof have entered into, will facilitate or otherwise participate in any type of payment transaction with the Company, including details regarding any such transactions; and

in the event any of the securities offered by us under this Prospectus are sold, transferred, assigned or hypothecated by us in a transaction that directly or indirectly involves a member firm of FINRA or any affiliates thereof, that prior to or at the time of said transaction the member firm will timely file all relevant documents with respect to such transaction(s) with the Corporate Finance Department of FINRA for review.

Further, no FINRA member firm may receive compensation in excess of that allowable under FINRA rules, including Rule 5110, in connection with the sale of the securities by the Company under this prospectus, which total compensation may not exceed 8%.

## **Direct Sales and Sales Through Agents**

We may sell the securities directly. In that event, no underwriters or agents would be involved. We may also sell the securities through agents we designate from time to time. In the prospectus supplement, we will name any agent involved in the offer or sale of the offered securities, and we will describe any commissions payable by us to the agent. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, any agent will agree to use its reasonable best efforts to solicit purchases for the period of its appointment.

## **Table of Contents**

We may sell the securities directly to institutional investors or others who may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of those securities. We will describe the terms of any such sales in the prospectus supplement.

### **Delayed Delivery Contracts**

If we so indicate in the prospectus supplement, we may authorize agents, underwriters or dealers to solicit offers from certain types of institutions to purchase securities from us at the public offering price under delayed delivery contracts. These contracts would provide for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The contracts would be subject only to those conditions described in the prospectus supplement. The prospectus supplement will describe the commission payable for solicitation of those contracts.

### **Remarketing**

We may offer and sell any of the securities in connection with a remarketing upon their purchase, in accordance with a redemption or repayment by their terms or otherwise, by one or more remarketing firms acting as principals for their own accounts or as our agents. We will identify any remarketing firm, the terms of any remarketing agreement and the compensation to be paid to the remarketing firm in the prospectus supplement. Remarketing firms may be deemed underwriters under the Securities Act of 1933.

### **General Information**

We may have agreements with the agents, dealers and underwriters to indemnify them against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, or to contribute with respect to payments that the agents, dealers or underwriters may be required to make. Agents, dealers and underwriters may be customers of, engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of their businesses.

Each series of offered securities will be a new issue, and other than the common stock, which is listed on the NYSE Amex, will have no established trading market. We may elect to list any series of offered securities on an exchange, but we are not obligated to do so. It is possible that one or more underwriters may make a market in a series of offered securities. However, they will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue market making at any time without notice. We cannot assure you that a liquid trading market for any of our offered securities will develop.

## **LEGAL MATTERS**

The validity of the issuance of the securities offered in this prospectus will be passed upon for us by Haynes and Boone, LLP, and as to certain of the guarantors, by J. Bradley Green, Esq., Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of Carriage Services, Inc. Mr. Green is a director and officer of substantially all of the guarantors. If certain legal matters in connection with an offering of the securities made by this prospectus and a related prospectus supplement are passed on by counsel for the underwriters of such offering, that counsel will be named in the applicable prospectus supplement related to that offering.

## **EXPERTS**

The consolidated financial statements of Carriage Services, Inc. as of December 31, 2009 and 2008, and for each of the years in the three year period ended December 31, 2009, and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2009 have been incorporated by reference in this prospectus 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 MORE INFORMATION**

We have filed a registration statement with the SEC under the Securities Act of 1933 that registers the securities we may offer pursuant to this prospectus. The registration statement, including the attached exhibits, contains additional relevant information about Carriage. The rules and regulations of the SEC allow us to omit some information included in the registration statement from the prospectus.

## **Table of Contents**

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information electronically with the SEC. You may read and copy these reports, proxy statements and other information at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington D.C. 20549 or at the SEC's other public reference facilities. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for more information about the operation of the public reference room. Our SEC filings are available on the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. We also make available free of charge on our website, at [www.carriageservices.com](http://www.carriageservices.com), all materials that we file electronically with the SEC, including our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, Section 16 reports and amendments to these reports as soon as reasonable practicable after such materials are electronically filed with, or furnished to, the SEC. Information contained on our web site or any other web site is not incorporated by reference into this prospectus and does not constitute a part of this prospectus.

## **INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference into this prospectus the information we have filed with the SEC. This means that we can disclose important information to you without actually including the specific information in this prospectus by referring you to other documents filed separately with the SEC. These other documents contain important information about us, our financial condition and the results of our operations. The information we incorporate by reference is an important part of this prospectus. You should read the information incorporated by reference for more detail. Information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and replace the information currently in this prospectus and information previously filed with the SEC.

We incorporate by reference into this prospectus the documents listed below, any filings we make with the SEC pursuant to Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act between the date of this prospectus and the termination of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to the effectiveness of the registration statement, (excluding any portions thereof that are deemed to be furnished and not filed):

Our annual report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2009 filed with the SEC on March 5, 2010;

Our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, June 30 and September 30, 2010 filed with the SEC on May 7, August 6 and November 5, 2010, respectively;

Our proxy statement on Schedule 14A filed with the SEC on April 13, 2010;

Our current reports on Form 8-K and filed with the SEC on February 18, May 6, May 18, August 5 and November 5, 2010 and February 25, 2011, in each case other than information furnished and not filed with the SEC; and

The description of our common stock contained in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A/A filed on December 4, 2002.

You may obtain any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus from the SEC through the SEC's web site at the address provided above. You may also request a copy of any document incorporated by reference in this prospectus (including exhibits to those documents specifically incorporated by reference in this document), at no cost, by visiting our internet web site at [www.Carriage.com](http://www.Carriage.com), or by writing or calling us at the following address and telephone number:

Carriage Services, Inc.  
3040 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 300

Houston, Texas 77056  
(713) 332-8400

You should rely only on the information provided in and incorporated by reference into this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone else to provide you with different information. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement is accurate as of any date other than the date indicated on these documents.