

OLYMPIC STEEL INC

Form S-3

October 29, 2009

Table of Contents

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 29, 2009
Registration No. 333-

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20549

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

OLYMPIC STEEL, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Ohio

(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

34-1245650

(I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)

5096 Richmond Road
Bedford Heights, Ohio 44146
(216) 292-3800

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of registrant's principal executive offices)

Michael D. Siegal, Chairman of the
Board and Chief Executive Officer
Olympic Steel, Inc.
5096 Richmond Road
Bedford Heights, Ohio 44146
(216) 292-3800

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

Copies To:

Christopher M. Kelly

Michael J. Solecki
Jones Day
901 Lakeside Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
Phone: (216) 586-3939
Fax: (216) 579-0212

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer
(Do not check if a smaller reporting company) Smaller reporting company

Table of Contents**CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE**

Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered(1)	Proposed Maximum Offering Price per Unit(1)(2)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(1)(3)	Amount of Registration Fee(1)
Common Stock, without par value(4)(11)				
Preferred Stock, without par value(5)(11)				
Depository Shares(6)(11)				
Warrants(7)(11)				
Subscription Rights(8)(11)				
Debt Securities(9)(11)				
Units (10)(11)				
Total	\$200,000,000	100%	\$200,000,000(12)	\$11,160

- (1) Not specified as to each class of securities to be registered pursuant to General Instruction II.D. to Form S-3.
- (2) The proposed maximum offering price per unit will be determined from time to time by the registrant in connection with the issuance by the registrant of the securities registered hereunder.
- (3) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rule 457(o).
- (4) Subject to note (12) below, there is being registered an indeterminate number of shares of common stock. Each share of common stock includes a right (Right) to purchase one one-hundredth of a share of Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock, without par value, on the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in the Rights Agreement, dated as of January 31, 2000 (the Rights Agreement), as amended by Amendment 1 to the Rights Agreement, dated as of September 16, 2008, by and between the registrant and Mellon Investor Services LLC, as successor to National City Bank, as rights agent. The terms of the Rights are described in the Rights Agreement, filed as Exhibit 4.1 to the registrant s Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on February 15, 2000, as amended by Amendment 1 to the Rights Agreement, filed as Exhibit 4.1 to the registrant s Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on September 19, 2008.
- (5) Subject to note (12) below, there is being registered an indeterminate number of shares of preferred stock.
- (6) Subject to note (12) below, there is being registered an indeterminate number of depository shares to be evidenced by depository receipts issued pursuant to a deposit agreement. If the registrant elects to offer to the public fractional interests in shares of preferred stock, then depository receipts will be distributed to those persons purchasing the fractional interests and the shares will be issued to the depository under the deposit agreement.
- (7) Subject to note (12) below, there is being registered an indeterminate amount and number of warrants. The warrants may represent the right to purchase common stock, preferred stock or debt securities.
- (8) Subject to note (12) below, there is being registered an indeterminate number of subscription rights that may represent a right to purchase common stock, preferred stock or debt securities.

- (9) Subject to note (12) below, there is being registered an indeterminate principal amount of debt securities.
- (10) Subject to note (12) below, there is being registered an indeterminate number of units. Each unit will be issued under a unit agreement and will represent an interest in a combination of one or more of the securities registered hereunder.
- (11) Subject to note (12) below, this registration statement also covers an indeterminate amount of securities as may be issued in exchange for, or upon conversion or exercise of, as the case may be, the preferred stock, depositary shares, warrants, subscription rights or debt securities registered hereunder. Any securities registered hereunder may be sold separately or as units with other securities registered hereunder. No separate consideration will be received for any securities registered hereunder that are issued in exchange for, or upon conversion of, as the case may be, the preferred stock, depositary shares, warrants, subscription rights or debt securities.
- (12) In no event will the aggregate initial offering price of all securities issued from time to time pursuant to the prospectus contained in this registration statement exceed \$200,000,000 or the equivalent thereof in one or more foreign currencies or foreign currency units. Such amount represents the offering price of any common stock, preferred stock and depositary shares, the principal amount of any debt securities issued at their stated principal amount, the issue price rather than the principal amount of any debt securities issued at an original issue discount, the issue price of any warrants, the exercise price of any securities issuable upon the exercise of warrants and the issue price of any securities issuable upon the exercise of subscription rights. The aggregate principal amount of debt securities may be increased if any debt securities are issued at an original issue discount by an amount such that the offering price to be received by the registrant shall be equal to the above amount to be registered. Any offering of securities denominated other than in United States dollars will be treated as the equivalent of United States dollars based on the exchange rate applicable to the purchase of such securities at the time of initial offering. The securities registered hereunder may be sold separately or as units with other securities registered hereunder.

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 the Registration Statement shall become effective on such date as the Securities and Exchange Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

Table of Contents

Explanatory Note

This registration statement contains two prospectuses:

a basic prospectus that covers the offering, issuance and sale, from time to time, of our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, warrants, subscription rights and debt securities, as well as units that include any of these securities, in one or more offerings, with an aggregate initial offering price of \$200,000,000 or the equivalent amount in other currencies or currency units; and

an open market sale agreement prospectus covering the offering, issuance and sale of up to an aggregate initial offering price of \$75,000,000 of our common stock that may be issued and sold under an Open Market Sale Agreement that we have entered into with Jefferies & Company, Inc.

The basic prospectus immediately follows this explanatory note. The open market sale agreement prospectus immediately follows the basic prospectus. The shares of common stock that we may offer, issue and sell under the open market sale agreement prospectus are included in the \$200,000,000 of securities that we may offer, issue and sell under the basic prospectus.

Table of Contents

The information in this preliminary prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This preliminary prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED OCTOBER 29, 2009

Prospectus

\$200,000,000
Common Stock
Preferred Stock
Depositary Shares
Warrants
Subscription Rights
Debt Securities
Units

We may offer and sell from time to time our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, warrants, subscription rights and debt securities, as well as units that include any of these securities. We may sell any combination of these securities in one or more offerings with an aggregate initial offering price of \$200,000,000 or the equivalent amount in other currencies or currency units.

We will provide the specific terms of the securities to be offered in one or more supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement carefully before you invest in our securities. This prospectus may not be used to offer and sell our securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement describing the method and terms of the offering of those offered securities.

We may sell the securities directly or to or through underwriters or dealers, and also to other purchasers or through agents. The names of any underwriters or agents that are included in a sale of securities to you, and any applicable commissions or discounts, will be stated in an accompanying prospectus supplement. In addition, the underwriters, if any, may over-allot a portion of the securities.

Investing in any of our securities involves risk. Please read carefully the section entitled **Risk Factors beginning on page 4 of this prospectus.**

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol **ZEUS**. None of the other securities that we may offer under this prospectus are currently publicly traded.

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 _____, 2009

Table of Contents

	Page
<u>About This Prospectus</u>	1
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	1
<u>Information We Incorporate By Reference</u>	1
<u>The Company</u>	3
<u>Risk Factors</u>	4
<u>Disclosure Regarding Forward-Looking Statements</u>	4
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	6
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	6
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	7
<u>Description of Depositary Shares</u>	10
<u>Description of Warrants</u>	12
<u>Description of Subscription Rights</u>	14
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	15
<u>Description of Units</u>	23
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	24
<u>Legal Matters</u>	26
<u>Experts</u>	26
<u>EX-1.2</u>	
<u>EX-4.3</u>	
<u>EX-5.1</u>	
<u>EX-12.1</u>	
<u>EX-23.1</u>	
<u>EX-25.1</u>	

Table of Contents

About This Prospectus

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the SEC using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf process, we may from time to time sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings up to an aggregate initial offering price of \$200,000,000 or the equivalent amount in other currencies or currency units.

This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. For a more complete understanding of the offering of the securities, you should refer to the registration statement, including its exhibits. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with additional information under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information** and **Information We Incorporate By Reference**.

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and in any prospectus supplement or in any free writing prospectus that we may provide you. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement, any document incorporated by reference or any free writing prospectus is accurate as of any date, other than the date mentioned on the cover page of these documents. We are not making offers to sell the securities in any jurisdiction in which an offer or solicitation is not authorized or in which the person making such offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to anyone to whom it is unlawful to make an offer or solicitation.

References in this prospectus to the terms **we**, **us**, **Olympic Steel** or **the Company** or other similar terms mean Olympic Steel, Inc. and its consolidated subsidiaries, unless we state otherwise or the context indicates otherwise.

Where You Can Find More Information

We are subject to the informational reporting requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. We file reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available over the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. You may read and copy any reports, statements and other information filed by us at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the Public Reference Room. You may also inspect our SEC reports and other information at the offices of NASDAQ Operations at 1735 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, or at our website at <http://www.olysteel.com>. The information contained on or accessible through our website is not a part of this prospectus, other than the documents that we file with the SEC that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

Information We Incorporate By Reference

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference into this prospectus the information in documents we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus, and information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information. Any statement contained in any document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in or omitted from this prospectus or any accompanying prospectus supplement, or in any other subsequently filed document that also is or is deemed to be incorporated by reference herein, modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus.

Table of Contents

We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and 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 until the completion of the offering of securities described in this prospectus:

our annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008;

our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2009, June 30, 2009 and September 30, 2009;

our current reports on Form 8-K filed on April 7, 2009 and July 30, 2009;

the description of our common stock set forth in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on January 31, 1994, and all amendments and reports filed for the purpose of updating that description; and

the description of our Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock purchase rights under the Rights Agreement filed as Exhibit 4.1 to our Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on February 15, 2000, as amended by Amendment 1 to the Rights Agreement, filed as Exhibit 4.1 to our Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on September 19, 2008 (the Rights Agreement).

We will not, however, incorporate by reference in this prospectus any documents or portions thereof that are not deemed filed with the SEC, including any information furnished pursuant to Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of our current reports on Form 8-K unless, and except to the extent, specified in such current reports.

We will provide you with a copy of any of these filings (other than an exhibit to these filings, unless the exhibit is specifically incorporated by reference into the filing requested) at no cost, if you submit a request to us by writing or telephoning us at the following address and telephone number:

Olympic Steel, Inc.
5096 Richmond Road
Bedford Heights, Ohio 44146
Telephone Number: (216) 292-3800
Attention: Treasurer

Table of Contents

The Company

We are a leading U.S. steel service center with over 55 years of experience. Our primary focus is on the direct sale and distribution of large volumes of processed carbon, coated and stainless flat-rolled sheet, coil and plate products. We act as an intermediary between steel producers and manufacturers that require processed steel for their operations. We serve customers in most carbon steel consuming industries, including manufacturers and fabricators of transportation and material handling equipment, construction and farm machinery, storage tanks, environmental and energy generation, automobiles, food service and electrical equipment, military vehicles and equipment, as well as general and plate fabricators and steel service centers. We distribute our products primarily through a direct sales force.

We operate as a single business segment with strategically-located processing and distribution facilities located throughout the United States. Our geographic footprint allows us to focus on regional customers and larger national and multi-national accounts, primarily located throughout the midwestern, eastern and southern United States.

Corporate Information

We are incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio. Our principal executive offices are located at 5096 Richmond Road, Bedford Heights, Ohio 44146. Our telephone number is (216) 292-3800. Our website is <http://www.olysteel.com>. The information contained on or accessible through our website is not part of this prospectus, other than the documents that we file with the SEC that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

Table of Contents

Risk Factors

Investing in our securities involves risk. Prior to making a decision about investing in our securities, you should carefully consider the specific factors discussed under the heading "Risk Factors" in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K and in our most recent quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, which are incorporated herein by reference and may be amended, supplemented or superseded from time to time by other reports we file with the SEC in the future. The risks and uncertainties we have described are not the only ones we face. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our operations. If any of these risks actually occurs, our business, results of operations and financial condition could suffer. In that case, the trading price of our securities could decline, and you could lose all or a part of your investment.

Disclosure Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, contains, and any prospectus supplement may contain, statements that constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements may be identified by the use of predictive, future-tense or forward-looking terminology, such as believes, anticipates, expects, estimates, intends, may, will or similar. These statements speak only as of the date of this prospectus, the date of the prospectus supplement or the date of the document incorporated by reference, as applicable, and we undertake no ongoing obligation, other than that imposed by law, to update these statements. These statements appear in a number of places in this prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, and relate to, among other things, our intent, belief or current expectations with respect to: our future financial condition, results of operations or prospects; our business and growth strategies; and our financing plans and forecasts. You are cautioned that any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve significant risks and uncertainties, and that actual results may differ materially from those contained in or implied by the forward-looking statements as a result of various factors, some of which are unknown, including, without limitation:

further deterioration of steel demand and steel pricing;

general and global business, economic, financial and political conditions, including the ongoing effects of the global credit crisis;

access to capital and global credit markets;

competitive factors such as availability and pricing of steel, industry shipping and inventory levels and rapid fluctuations in customer demand and steel pricing;

the cyclical nature and volatility within the steel industry;

the ability of customers (especially those that may be highly leveraged, those in the domestic automotive industry and those with inadequate liquidity) to maintain their credit availability;

customer, supplier, and competitor consolidation, bankruptcy or insolvency, especially those in the domestic automotive industry;

reduced production schedules, layoffs or work stoppages by our own or our suppliers' or customers' personnel;

the availability and costs of transportation and logistical services;

equipment installation delays or malfunctions;

the amounts, successes and our ability to continue our capital investments and our business information system project;

the successes of our strategic efforts and initiatives to increase sales volumes, maintain or improve working capital turnover and free cash flows, reduce costs, inventory and debt in a declining market, while improving customer service;

Table of Contents

the timing and outcome of inventory lower of cost or market adjustments;

the adequacy of our existing information technology and business system software;

the successful implementation of our new enterprise-wide information system;

the timing and outcome of Olympic Laser Processing s (a joint venture in which we and the United States Steel Corporation each own 50%) efforts and ability to liquidate its remaining assets;

our ability to pay regular quarterly cash dividends and the amounts and timing of any future dividends; and

our ability to generate free cash flow through operations, reduce inventory and to repay debt within anticipated timeframes.

These factors and the other risk factors described in this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement, including the documents incorporated by reference, are not necessarily all of the important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed in any of our forward-looking statements. Other unknown or unpredictable factors also could harm our results. Consequently, there can be no assurance that the actual results or developments anticipated by us will be realized or, even if substantially realized, that they will have the expected consequences to or effects on us.

Table of Contents**Use of Proceeds**

Unless we inform you otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we expect to use the net proceeds from the sale of securities for general corporate purposes. These purposes may include, but are not limited to:

- reduction or refinancing of outstanding indebtedness or other corporate obligations;
- additions to working capital;
- capital expenditures; and
- acquisitions.

Pending any specific application, we may initially invest funds in short-term marketable securities or apply them to the reduction of short-term indebtedness.

Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges

The following table sets forth our ratio of consolidated earnings to fixed charges for the periods presented:

	Nine Months Ended September 30, 2009(2)	2008	Year Ended December 31,			
		2007	2006	2005	2004	
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges(1)		59.5x	14.2x	18.1x	10.4x	21.8x

(1) For purposes of calculating our ratio of earnings to fixed charges:

earnings consist of income (loss) before taxes plus: (i) amortization of previously capitalized interest; (ii) interest (including capitalized interest); and (iii) the interest portion of rental expense less capitalized interest;

fixed charges consist of: (i) capitalized interest; (ii) interest and other expense on debt; and (iii) the interest portion of rental expense; and

the ratio of earnings to fixed charges is determined by dividing earnings by fixed charges, as defined above.

(2) Earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges by approximately \$95.3 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2009; accordingly, no ratio is presented for such period.

Table of Contents

Description of Capital Stock

The following description is a general summary of the terms of the common stock and preferred stock that we may issue. The description below and in any prospectus supplement does not include all of the terms of the common stock and preferred stock and should be read together with our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Code of Regulations, copies of which have been filed previously with the SEC. For more information on how you can obtain copies of our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Code of Regulations, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

General

Under our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation, we are authorized to issue up to 25,000,000 shares of capital stock, including:

20,000,000 shares of common stock, without par value; and

5,000,000 shares of Serial Preferred Stock, without par value, which we refer to as Serial Preferred Shares, consisting of 2,500,000 voting Serial Preferred Shares and 2,500,000 non-voting Serial Preferred Shares.

As of October 29, 2009, 10,883,213 shares of our common stock were issued and outstanding.

Common Stock

Each outstanding share of common stock is entitled to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders, and there are no cumulative voting rights. Our Amended and Restated Code of Regulations provide for our Board of Directors to be divided into two classes of directors serving staggered terms.

Subject to the rights of holders of any outstanding Serial Preferred Shares, each record holder of common stock on the applicable record date is entitled to receive dividends on common stock to the extent authorized by our Board of Directors out of assets legally available for the payment of dividends. In addition, subject to the rights of holders of any outstanding Serial Preferred Shares, holders of common stock are entitled to share ratably in our assets legally available for distribution to our shareholders in the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up after payment of or adequate provision for all our known debts and liabilities.

Holders of common stock do not have any preemptive rights to subscribe for any of our securities. No conversion, redemption or sinking fund provisions apply to the common stock, and the holders of common stock are not liable to further calls or assessments by us.

Shareholder Rights Plan

Under the terms of the Rights Agreement, one preferred share purchase right, which we refer to as a Right, is associated with each share of common stock. Until the occurrence of specified events described in the Rights Agreement, the Rights are not exercisable, are evidenced by the certificates for our common stock and may be transferred only with our common stock. The Rights will expire on March 6, 2010, unless earlier redeemed, exchanged or amended.

Each Right entitles the registered holder to purchase from us one one-hundredth of a share of Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock, without par value, at a price of \$170.00 per one one-hundredth of a preferred share. The Rights Agreement also provides, subject to specified exceptions and limitations, that common stock issued or delivered from our treasury after the record date will be accompanied by a right. The Rights are in all respects subject to and governed by the provisions of the Rights Agreement.

Table of Contents

Preferred Stock

Our Board of Directors is authorized, without shareholder approval, to issue up to 5,000,000 Serial Preferred Shares in one or more series and to fix the rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions granted to or imposed upon the Serial Preferred Shares, including voting rights, dividend rights, conversion rights, terms of redemption, liquidation preference, sinking fund terms and the number of shares constituting any series or the designation of a series. Our Board of Directors can, without shareholder approval, issue Serial Preferred Shares with voting and conversion rights that could adversely affect the voting power of the holders of common stock. Any Serial Preferred Shares issued would also rank senior to our common stock as to rights up on liquidation, winding-up or dissolution. If we issue any Serial Preferred Shares that are convertible into our common stock, such issuance shares could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of our company.

Control Share Acquisitions

Section 1701.831 of the Ohio Revised Code provides that certain notice and informational filings and special shareholder meeting and voting procedures must be followed prior to consummation of a proposed control share acquisition. The Ohio Revised Code defines a control share acquisition as any acquisition of an issuer's shares which would entitle the acquirer, immediately after that acquisition, directly or indirectly, to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power of the issuer in the election of directors within any one of the following ranges of that voting power:

one-fifth or more but less than one-third of that voting power;

one-third or more but less than a majority of that voting power; or

a majority or more of that voting power.

Assuming compliance with the notice and information filings prescribed by the statute, the proposed control share acquisition may be made only if, at a special meeting of shareholders, the acquisition is approved by at least a majority of the voting power of the issuer represented at the meeting and at least a majority of the voting power remaining after excluding the combined voting power of the interested shares. Interested shares are the shares held by the intended acquirer and the employee-directors and officers of the issuer, as well as certain shares that were acquired after the date of the first public disclosure of the acquisition but before the record date for the meeting of shareholders and shares that were transferred, together with the voting power thereof, after the record date for the meeting of shareholders.

Business Combinations with Certain Persons

We are subject to Chapter 1704 of the Ohio Revised Code, which prohibits certain business combinations and transactions between an issuing public corporation and an Ohio law interested shareholder for at least three years after the Ohio law interested shareholder attains 10% ownership, unless the Board of Directors of the issuing public corporation approves the transaction before the Ohio law interested shareholder attains 10% ownership. An issuing public corporation is an Ohio corporation with 50 or more shareholders that has its principal place of business, principal executive offices, or substantial assets within the State of Ohio, and as to which no close corporation agreement exists. An Ohio law interested shareholder is a beneficial owner of 10% or more of the shares of a corporation. Examples of transactions regulated by Chapter 1704 include the disposition of assets, mergers and consolidations, voluntary dissolutions and the transfer of shares.

Subsequent to the three-year period, a transaction subject to Chapter 1704 may take place provided that certain conditions are satisfied, including:

prior to the interested shareholder's share acquisition date, the board of directors approved the purchase of shares by the interested shareholder;

the transaction is approved by the holders of shares with at least 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the voting power of the corporation (or a different proportion set forth in the articles of incorporation), including at least a majority of the outstanding shares after excluding shares controlled by the Ohio law interested shareholder; or

Table of Contents

the business combination results in shareholders, other than the Ohio law interested shareholder, receiving a fair price plus interest for their shares.

Chapter 1704 is applicable to all corporations formed under Ohio law.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

Mellon Investor Services LLC serves as the transfer agent and registrar for our common stock. We will select the transfer agent and registrar for a series of preferred stock, and each one will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

Description of Depositary Shares

General

We may offer depositary shares representing fractional shares of our preferred stock of any series. The following description sets forth certain general terms and provisions of the depositary shares that we may offer pursuant to this prospectus. The particular terms of the depositary shares, including the fraction of a preferred share that such depositary share will represent, and the extent, if any, to which the general terms and provisions may apply to the depositary shares so offered will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

The shares of preferred stock represented by depositary shares will be deposited under a depositary agreement between us and a bank or trust company that meets certain requirements and is selected by us, which we refer to as the bank depositary. Each owner of a depositary share will be entitled to all the rights and preferences of the shares of preferred stock represented by the depositary share. The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the depositary agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to those persons purchasing the fractional shares of preferred stock in accordance with the terms of the offering. The deposit agreement will also contain provisions relating to the manner in which any subscription or similar rights we offer to holders of the preferred stock will be made available to the holders of depositary shares.

The following description is a general summary of some common provisions of a depositary agreement and the related depositary receipts. The description below and in any prospectus supplement does not include all of the terms of the depositary agreement and the related depositary receipts. Copies of the form of depositary agreement and the depositary receipts relating to any particular issue of depositary shares will be filed with the SEC each time we issue depositary shares, and you should read those documents for provisions that may be important to you. For more information on how you can obtain copies of the forms of the depositary agreement and the related depositary receipts, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Dividends and Other Distributions

If we pay a cash distribution or dividend on a series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares, the bank depositary will distribute these dividends to the record holders of these depositary shares. If the distributions are in property other than cash, the bank depositary will distribute the property to the record holders of the depositary shares. However, if the bank depositary determines that it is not feasible to make the distribution of property, the bank depositary may, with our approval, sell this property and distribute the net proceeds from this sale to the record holders of the depositary shares.

Redemption of Depositary Shares

If we redeem a series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares, the bank depositary will redeem the depositary shares from the proceeds received by the bank depositary in connection with the redemption. The redemption price per depositary share will equal the applicable fraction of the redemption price per share of the preferred stock. If fewer than all the depositary shares are redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by lot or pro rata as the bank depositary may determine.

Voting the Preferred Stock

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which the holders of the preferred stock represented by depositary shares are entitled to vote, the bank depositary will mail the notice to the record holders of the depositary shares relating to the preferred stock. Each record holder of these depositary shares on the record date (which will be the same date as the record date for the preferred stock) may instruct the bank depositary as to how to vote the preferred stock represented by this holder's depositary shares. The bank depositary will endeavor, insofar as practicable, to vote the amount of the preferred stock represented by such depositary shares in accordance with these instructions, and we will take all action which the bank depositary deems necessary in order to enable the bank depositary to do so. The bank depositary will abstain from voting shares of the preferred stock to the extent it does not receive specific instructions from the holders of depositary shares representing this preferred stock.

Table of Contents

Amendment and Termination of the Depositary Agreement

The form of depositary receipt evidencing the depositary shares and any provision of the depositary agreement may be amended by agreement between the bank depositary and us. However, any amendment that materially and adversely alters the rights of the holders of depositary shares will not be effective unless this amendment has been approved by the holders of at least a majority of the depositary shares then outstanding. The depositary agreement may be terminated by the bank depositary or us only if:

all outstanding depositary shares have been redeemed; or

there has been a final distribution in respect of the preferred stock in connection with any liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company and this distribution has been distributed to the holders of depositary receipts.

Charges of Bank Depositary

We will pay all transfer and other taxes and governmental charges arising solely from the existence of the depositary arrangements. We will pay charges of the bank depositary in connection with the initial deposit of the preferred stock and any redemption of the preferred stock. Holders of depositary receipts will pay other transfer and other taxes and governmental charges and any other charges, including a fee for the withdrawal of shares of preferred stock upon surrender of depositary receipts, as are expressly provided in the depositary agreement to be for their accounts.

Withdrawal of Preferred Stock

Except as may be provided otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, upon surrender of depositary receipts at the principal office of the bank depositary, subject to the terms of the depositary agreement, the owner of the depositary shares may demand delivery of the number of whole shares of preferred stock and all money and other property, if any, represented by those depositary shares. Fractional shares of preferred stock will not be issued. If the depositary receipts delivered by the holder evidence a number of depositary shares in excess of the number of depositary shares representing the number of whole shares of preferred stock to be withdrawn, the bank depositary will deliver to this holder at the same time a new depositary receipt evidencing the excess number of depositary shares. Holders of preferred stock thus withdrawn may not thereafter deposit those shares under the depositary agreement or receive depositary receipts evidencing depositary shares therefor.

Miscellaneous

The bank depositary will forward to holders of depositary receipts all reports and communications from us that are delivered to the bank depositary and that we are required to furnish to the holders of preferred stock.

Neither the bank depositary nor we will be liable if we are prevented or delayed by law or any circumstance beyond our control in performing our obligations under the depositary agreement. The obligations of the bank depositary and us under the depositary agreement will be limited to performance in good faith of our duties thereunder, and we will not be obligated to prosecute or defend any legal proceeding in respect of any depositary shares or shares of preferred stock unless satisfactory indemnity is furnished. We may rely upon written advice of counsel or accountants, or upon information provided by persons presenting shares of preferred stock for deposit, holders of depositary receipts or other persons believed to be competent and on documents believed to be genuine.

Resignation and Removal of Bank Depositary

The bank depositary may resign at any time by delivering to us notice of its election to do so, and we may at any time remove the bank depositary. Any such resignation or removal will take effect upon the appointment of a successor bank depositary and the successor's acceptance of this appointment. The successor bank depositary must be appointed within 60 days after delivery of the notice of resignation or removal and must be a bank or trust company meeting the requirements of the depositary agreement.

Table of Contents

Description of Warrants

General

We may issue warrants for the purchase of common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares or debt securities. The following description sets forth certain general terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer pursuant to this prospectus. The particular terms of the warrants and the extent, if any, to which the general terms and provisions may apply to the warrants so offered will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Warrants may be issued independently or together with other securities and may be attached to or separate from any offered securities. Each series of warrants will be issued under a separate warrant agreement to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as warrant agent. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants and will not have any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any holders or beneficial owners of warrants.

A copy of the forms of the warrant agreement and the warrant certificate relating to any particular issue of warrants will be filed with the SEC each time we issue warrants, and you should read those documents for provisions that may be important to you. For more information on how you can obtain copies of the forms of the warrant agreement and the related warrant certificate, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Debt Warrants

The prospectus supplement relating to a particular issue of warrants to issue debt securities will describe the terms of those warrants, including the following:

the title of the warrants;

the offering price for the warrants, if any;

the aggregate number of the warrants;

the designation and terms of the debt securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants;

if applicable, the designation and terms of the debt securities that the warrants are issued with and the number of warrants issued with each debt security;

if applicable, the date from and after which the warrants and any debt securities issued with them will be separately transferable;

the principal amount of debt securities that may be purchased upon exercise of a warrant and the price at which the debt securities may be purchased upon exercise;

the dates on which the right to exercise the warrants will commence and expire;

if applicable, the minimum or maximum amount of the warrants that may be exercised at any one time;

whether the warrants represented by the warrant certificates or debt securities that may be issued upon exercise of the warrants will be issued in registered or bearer form;

information relating to book-entry procedures, if any;

the currency or currency units in which the offering price, if any, and the exercise price are payable;

if applicable, a discussion of material United States federal income tax considerations;

anti-dilution provisions of the warrants, if any;

redemption or call provisions, if any, applicable to the warrants;

any additional terms of the warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the warrants; and

any other information we think is important about the warrants.

Table of Contents

Stock Warrants

The prospectus supplement relating to a particular issue of warrants to issue common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares will describe the terms of the common stock warrants and preferred stock warrants, including the following:

the title of the warrants;

the offering price for the warrants, if any;

the aggregate number of the warrants;

the designation and terms of the common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares that may be purchased upon exercise of the warrants;

if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities that the warrants are issued with and the number of warrants issued with each security;

if applicable, the date from and after which the warrants and any securities issued with the warrants will be separately transferable;

the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock or depositary shares that may be purchased upon exercise of a warrant and the price at which the shares may be purchased upon exercise;

the dates on which the right to exercise the warrants commence and expire;

if applicable, the minimum or maximum amount of the warrants that may be exercised at any one time;

the currency or currency units in which the offering price, if any, and the exercise price are payable;

if applicable, a discussion of material United States federal income tax considerations;

anti-dilution provisions of the warrants, if any;

redemption or call provisions, if any, applicable to the warrants;

any additional terms of the warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the warrants; and

any other information we think is important about the warrants.

Exercise of Warrants

Each warrant will entitle the holder of the warrant to purchase at the exercise price set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement the number of shares of common stock, preferred stock or depositary shares or the principal amount of debt securities being offered. Holders may exercise warrants at any time up to the close of business on the expiration date set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants are void. Holders may exercise warrants as set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants being offered.

Until a holder exercises the warrants to purchase our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares or debt securities, the holder will not have any rights as a holder of our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares or debt securities, as the case may be, by virtue of ownership of warrants.

Table of Contents

Description of Subscription Rights

We may issue to our shareholders subscription rights to purchase our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares or debt securities. The following description sets forth certain general terms and provisions of the subscription rights that we may offer pursuant to this prospectus. The particular terms of the subscription rights and the extent, if any, to which the general terms and provisions may apply to the subscription rights so offered will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Subscription rights may be issued independently or together with any other security offered by this prospectus and may or may not be transferable by the shareholder receiving the rights in the rights offering. In connection with any rights offering, we may enter into a standby underwriting agreement with one or more underwriters pursuant to which the underwriter will purchase any securities that remain unsubscribed for upon completion of the rights offering, or offer these securities to other parties who are not our shareholders. A copy of the form of subscription rights certificate will be filed with the SEC each time we issue subscription rights, and you should read that document for provisions that may be important to you. For more information on how you can obtain a copy of any subscription rights certificate, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

The applicable prospectus supplement relating to any subscription rights will describe the terms of the offered subscription rights, including, where applicable, the following:

the exercise price for the subscription rights;

the number of subscription rights issued to each shareholder;

the extent to which the subscription rights are transferable;

any other terms of the subscription rights, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the subscription rights;

the date on which the right to exercise the subscription rights will commence and the date on which the right will expire;

the extent to which the subscription rights include an over-subscription privilege with respect to unsubscribed securities; and

the material terms of any standby underwriting arrangement entered into by us in connection with the subscription rights offering.

Table of Contents

Description of Debt Securities

The following description sets forth certain general terms and provisions of the debt securities that we may issue, which may be issued as convertible or exchangeable debt securities. We will set forth the particular terms of the debt securities we offer in a prospectus supplement and the extent, if any, to which the following general terms and provisions will apply to particular debt securities.

The debt securities will be issued under an indenture to be entered into between us and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A., as trustee. The indenture, and any supplemental indentures thereto, will be subject to, and governed by, the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended. The following description of general terms and provisions relating to the debt securities and the indenture under which the debt securities will be issued is a summary only and therefore is not complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, the terms and provisions of the indenture. The form of the indenture has been filed with the SEC as an exhibit to the registration statement, of which this prospectus forms a part, and you should read the indenture for provisions that may be important to you. For more information on how you can obtain a copy of the form of the indenture, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Capitalized terms used in this section and not defined herein have the meanings specified in the indenture. When we refer to Olympic Steel, we, our and us in this section, we mean Olympic Steel, Inc. excluding, unless the context otherwise requires or as otherwise expressly stated, its subsidiaries.

Unless otherwise specified in a prospectus supplement, the debt securities will be our direct, unsecured obligations and will rank equally with all of our other unsecured indebtedness.

General

The terms of each series of debt securities will be established by or pursuant to a resolution of our Board of Directors and set forth or determined in the manner provided in a resolution of our Board of Directors, supplemental indenture or officers' certificate. The particular terms of each series of debt securities will be described in a prospectus supplement relating to such series (including any pricing supplement or term sheet).

We can issue an unlimited amount of debt securities under the indenture that may be in one or more series. Debt securities may differ between series in respect to any matter, but all series of debt securities will be equally and ratably entitled to the benefits of the indenture. We will set forth in a prospectus supplement (including any pricing supplement or term sheet) relating to any series of debt securities being offered, the aggregate principal amount and the following terms of the debt securities, if applicable:

the title of the series of debt securities;

the price or prices (expressed as a percentage of the principal amount) at which the series of debt securities will be issued;

any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the series of debt securities;

the date or dates on which the principal on the series of debt securities is payable;

the rate or rates (which may be fixed or variable) per annum, if applicable, or the method used to determine such rate or rates (including any commodity, commodity index, stock exchange index or financial index) at which the

series of debt securities will bear interest, if any, the date or dates from which such interest, if any, will accrue, the date or dates on which such interest, if any, will commence and be payable and any regular record date for the interest payable on any interest payment date;

the place or places where the principal of, premium and interest, if any, on the series of debt securities will be payable;

if applicable, the period within which, the price at which and the terms and conditions upon which the series of debt securities may be redeemed;

any obligation we may have to redeem or purchase the series of debt securities pursuant to any sinking fund or analogous provisions or at the option of a holder of the series of debt securities;

Table of Contents

the dates, if any, on which and the price or prices at which we will repurchase the series of debt securities at the option of the holders of that series of debt securities and other detailed terms and provisions of such repurchase obligations;

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

the form of the series of debt securities and whether the series of debt securities will be issuable as global debt securities;

the portion of principal amount of the series of debt securities payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity date, if other than the principal amount;

the currency of denomination of the series of debt securities and, if other than U.S. Dollars or the ECU, the agency responsible for overseeing such currency;

the designation of the currency, currencies or currency units in which payment of principal of, premium and interest, if any, on the series of debt securities will be made;

if payments of principal of, premium or interest, if any, on the series of debt securities will be made in one or more currencies or currency units other than that or those in which the series of debt securities are denominated, the manner in which the exchange rate with respect to such payments will be determined;

the manner in which the amounts of payment of principal of, premium or interest on the series of debt securities will be determined, if such amounts may be determined by reference to an index based on a currency or currencies or by reference to a commodity, commodity index, stock exchange index or financial index;

any provisions relating to any security provided for the series of debt securities;

any addition to or change in the Events of Default described in this prospectus or in the indenture which applies to the series of debt securities and any change in the right of the trustee or the holders of the series of debt securities to declare the principal amount thereof due and payable;

any addition to or change in the covenants described in this prospectus or in the indenture with respect to the series of debt securities;

any other terms of the series of debt securities (which may supplement, modify or delete any provision of the indenture as it applies to such series);

any depositaries, interest rate calculation agents, exchange rate calculation agents or other agents with respect to the series of debt securities, if other than appointed in the indenture;

any provisions relating to conversion of the series of debt securities; and

whether the series of debt securities will be senior or subordinated debt securities and a description of the subordination thereof.

In addition, the indenture does not limit our ability to issue convertible or subordinated debt securities. Any conversion or subordination provisions of a particular series of debt securities will be set forth in the resolution of our Board of Directors, the officers' certificate or supplemental indenture related to that series of debt securities and will be described in the relevant prospectus supplement. Such terms may include provisions for conversion, either mandatory, at the option of the holder or at our option, in which case the number of shares of common stock or other securities to be received by the holders of debt securities would be calculated as of a time and in the manner stated in the prospectus supplement.

We may issue debt securities that provide for an amount less than their stated principal amount to be due and payable upon declaration of acceleration of their maturity pursuant to the terms of the indenture. We will provide you with information on the federal income tax considerations and other special considerations applicable to any of these debt securities in the applicable prospectus supplement.

If we denominate the purchase price of any of the debt securities in a foreign currency or currencies or a foreign currency unit or units, or if the principal of and any premium and interest on any series of debt securities is payable in a foreign currency or currencies or a foreign currency unit or units, we will provide you with

Table of Contents

information on the restrictions, elections, general tax considerations, specific terms and other information with respect to that issue of debt securities and such foreign currency or currencies or foreign currency unit or units in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Transfer and Exchange

Each debt security will be represented by either one or more global securities registered in the name of The Depository Trust Company, as Depository (the Depository), or a nominee (we will refer to any debt security represented by a global debt security as a book-entry debt security), or a certificate issued in definitive registered form (we will refer to any debt security represented by a certificated security as a certificated debt security) as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Except as set forth under the heading Global Debt Securities and Book-Entry System below, book-entry debt securities will not be issuable in certificated form.

Certificated Debt Securities. You may transfer or exchange certificated debt securities at any office we maintain for this purpose in accordance with the terms of the indenture. No service charge will be made for any transfer or exchange of certificated debt securities, but we may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or other governmental charge payable in connection with a transfer or exchange.

You may effect the transfer of certificated debt securities and the right to receive the principal of, premium and interest on certificated debt securities only by surrendering the certificate representing those certificated debt securities and either reissuance by us or the trustee of the certificate to the new holder or the issuance by us or the trustee of a new certificate to the new holder.

Global Debt Securities and Book-Entry System. Each global debt security representing book-entry debt securities will be issued to the Depository or a nominee of the Depository and registered in the name of the Depository or a nominee of the Depository.

The Depository has indicated it intends to follow the following procedures with respect to book-entry debt securities.

Ownership of beneficial interests in book-entry debt securities will be limited to persons that have accounts with the Depository for the related global debt security (participants) or persons that may hold interests through participants. Upon the issuance of a global debt security, the Depository will credit, on its book-entry registration and transfer system, the participants' accounts with the respective principal amounts of the book-entry debt securities represented by such global debt security beneficially owned by such participants. The accounts to be credited will be designated by any dealers, underwriters or agents participating in the distribution of the book-entry debt securities. Ownership of book-entry debt securities will be shown on, and the transfer of such ownership interests will be effected only through, records maintained by the Depository for the related global debt security (with respect to interests of participants) and on the records of participants (with respect to interests of persons holding through participants). The laws of some states may require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of such securities in definitive form. These laws may impair the ability to own, transfer or pledge beneficial interests in book-entry debt securities.

So long as the Depository for a global debt security, or its nominee, is the registered owner of that global debt security, the Depository or its nominee, as the case may be, will be considered the sole owner or holder of the book-entry debt securities represented by such global debt security for all purposes under the indenture. Except as described below, beneficial owners of book-entry debt securities will not be entitled to have securities registered in their names, will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of a certificate in definitive form representing securities and will not be considered the owners or holders of those securities under the indenture. Accordingly, each person beneficially owning book-entry debt securities must rely on the procedures of the Depository for the related global debt security and, if such person is not a participant, on the procedures of the participant through which such

person owns its interest, to exercise any rights of a holder under the indenture.

We understand, however, that under existing industry practice, the Depositary will authorize the persons on whose behalf it holds a global debt security to exercise certain rights of holders of debt securities, and the indenture provides that we, the trustee and our respective agents will treat as the holder of a debt security the persons

Table of Contents

specified in a written statement of the Depositary with respect to such global debt security for purposes of obtaining any consents, declarations, waivers or directions required to be given by holders of the debt securities pursuant to the indenture.

We will make payments of principal of, and premium and interest, if any, on book-entry debt securities to the Depositary or its nominee, as the case may be, as the registered holder of the related global debt security. Olympic Steel, the trustee and any other agent of ours or agent of the trustee will not have any responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records relating to or payments made on account of beneficial ownership interests in a global debt security or for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to beneficial ownership interests.

We expect that the Depositary, upon receipt of any payment of principal of, premium or interest, if any, on a global debt security, will immediately credit participants' accounts with payments in amounts proportionate to the respective amounts of book-entry debt securities held by each participant as shown on the records of such Depositary. We also expect that payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in book-entry debt securities held through those participants will be governed by standing customer instructions and customary practices, as is now the case with the securities held for the accounts of customers in bearer form or registered in street name, and will be the responsibility of those participants.

We will issue certificated debt securities in exchange for each global debt security only if (i) the Depositary notifies us that it is unwilling or unable to continue as Depositary for such global debt security or if at any time such Depositary ceases to be a clearing agency registered under the Exchange Act, and, in either case, we fail to appoint a successor Depositary registered as a clearing agency under the Exchange Act within 90 days of such event or (ii) we execute and deliver to the trustee an officers' certificate to the effect that such global debt security shall be so exchangeable. Any certificated debt securities issued in exchange for a global debt security will be registered in such name or names as the Depositary shall instruct the trustee. We expect that such instructions will be based upon directions received by the Depositary from participants with respect to ownership of book-entry debt securities relating to such global debt security.

We have obtained the foregoing information concerning the Depositary and the Depositary's book-entry system from sources we believe to be reliable, but we take no responsibility for the accuracy of this information.

No Protection In the Event of a Change of Control

Unless we state otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the debt securities will not contain any provisions which may afford holders of the debt securities protection in the event we have a change in control or in the event of a highly leveraged transaction (whether or not such transaction results in a change in control) which could adversely affect holders of debt securities.

Covenants

We will set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement any restrictive covenants applicable to any issue of debt securities.

Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets

We may not consolidate with or merge with or into, or convey, transfer or lease all or substantially all of our properties and assets to, any person (a successor person) unless:

we are the surviving corporation or the successor person (if other than Olympic Steel) is a corporation organized and validly existing under the laws of any U.S. domestic jurisdiction and expressly assumes our obligations on the debt securities and under the indenture;

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no Event of Default, and no event which, after notice or lapse of time, or both, would become an Event of Default, shall have occurred and be continuing under the indenture; and

certain other conditions are met.

Table of Contents

Notwithstanding the above, any subsidiary of Olympic Steel may consolidate with, merge into or transfer all or part of its properties to Olympic Steel

Events of Default

Event of Default means with respect to any series of debt securities, any of the following events, unless in the board resolution, supplemental indenture or officers' certificate, it is provided that such series of debt securities shall not have the benefit of a particular Event of Default:

default in the payment of any interest upon any debt security of that series when it becomes due and payable, and continuance of that default for a period of 30 days (unless the entire amount of the payment is deposited by us with the trustee or with a paying agent prior to the expiration of the such period of 30 days);

default in the payment of principal of or premium on any debt security of that series at maturity or which such principal otherwise becomes due and payable;

default in the performance or breach of any other covenant or warranty by us in the indenture (other than a covenant or warranty that has been included in the indenture solely for the benefit of a series of debt securities other than that series), which default continues uncured for a period of 60 days after written notice thereof has been given, by registered or certified mail, to us by the trustee or to us and the trustee by the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series, as provided in the indenture;

certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of Olympic Steel; and

any other Event of Default provided with respect to debt securities of that series that is described in the applicable board resolution, supplemental indenture or officers' certificate establishing such series of debt securities.

No Event of Default with respect to a particular series of debt securities (except as to certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization) necessarily constitutes an Event of Default with respect to any other series of debt securities. The occurrence of certain Events of Default or an acceleration under the indenture may constitute an event of default under certain of our other indebtedness outstanding from time to time.

If an Event of Default with respect to debt securities of any series at the time outstanding occurs and is continuing, then the trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may, by a notice in writing to us (and to the trustee if given by the holders), declare to be due and payable immediately the principal (or, if the debt securities of that series are discount securities, that portion of the principal amount as may be specified in the terms of that series) of and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all debt securities of that series. In the case of an Event of Default resulting from certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, the principal (or such specified amount) of and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all outstanding debt securities will become and be immediately due and payable without any declaration or other act on the part of the trustee or any holder of outstanding debt securities. At any time after a declaration of acceleration with respect to debt securities of any series has been made, and before a judgment or decree for payment of the money due has been obtained by the trustee, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may rescind and annul the acceleration if all Events of Default, other than the non-payment of accelerated principal and interest, if any, with respect to debt securities of that series, have been cured or waived as provided in the indenture. We will describe in the prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities that are discount securities the particular provisions relating to acceleration of a portion of the principal amount of such discount

securities upon the occurrence of an Event of Default.

The indenture provides that the trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under the indenture unless the trustee receives indemnity satisfactory to it against any loss, liability or expense. Subject to certain rights of the trustee, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee, with respect to the debt securities of that series.

Table of Contents

No holder of any debt security of any series will have any right to institute any proceeding, judicial or otherwise, with respect to the indenture or for the appointment of a receiver or trustee, or for any remedy under the indenture, unless:

that holder has previously given to the trustee written notice of a continuing Event of Default with respect to debt securities of that series; and

the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request, and offered reasonable indemnity, to the trustee to institute the proceeding as trustee, and the trustee has not received from the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series a direction inconsistent with that request and has failed to institute the proceeding within 60 days.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the indenture, the holder of any debt security will have an absolute and unconditional right to receive payment of the principal of, premium and interest, if any, on that debt security on or after the due dates expressed in that debt security and to institute suit for the enforcement of payment.

The indenture requires us, within 120 days after the end of our fiscal year, to furnish to the trustee an officers certificate as to compliance with the indenture. The indenture provides that the trustee may withhold notice to the holders of debt securities of any series of any event which, after notice or lapse of time, or both, would become an Event of Default or any Event of Default (except in payment of principal of, premium or interest on any debt securities of that series) with respect to debt securities of that series if it in good faith determines that withholding notice is in the interest of the holders of those debt securities.

Modification and Waiver

We may modify and amend the indenture with the consent of the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series affected by the modifications or amendments. We may not make any modification or amendment without the consent of the holders of each affected debt security then outstanding if that amendment will:

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

reduce the rate of or extend the time for payment of interest (including default interest) on any debt security;

reduce the principal of or premium on or change the stated maturity date of any debt security or reduce the amount of, or postpone the date fixed for, the payment of any sinking fund or analogous obligation with respect to any series of debt securities;

reduce the principal amount of discount securities payable upon acceleration of maturity;

waive a default in the payment of the principal of, premium or interest, if any, on any debt security (except a rescission of acceleration of the debt securities of any series by the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of the then outstanding debt securities of that series and a waiver of the payment default that resulted from such acceleration);

make the principal of or premium or interest on any debt security payable in currency other than that stated in the debt security;

make any change to certain provisions of the indenture relating to, among other things, the right of holders of debt securities to receive payment of the principal of, premium and interest on those debt securities and to institute suit for the enforcement of any such payment and to waivers or amendments; or

waive a redemption payment, made at the option of Olympic Steel, with respect to any debt security.

Except for certain specified provisions, the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may on behalf of the holders of all debt securities of that series waive our compliance with provisions of the indenture. The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may on behalf of the holders of all the debt securities of such series waive any past default under the

Table of Contents

indenture with respect to that series and its consequences, except a default in the payment of the principal of, premium or interest, if any, on any debt security of that series; provided, however, that the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may rescind an acceleration and its consequences, including any related payment default that resulted from such acceleration.

Defeasance of Debt Securities and Certain Covenants in Certain Circumstances

Legal Defeasance. The indenture provides that, unless otherwise provided by the terms of the applicable series of debt securities, we may be discharged from any and all obligations in respect of the debt securities of any series (except for certain obligations to register the transfer or exchange of debt securities of such series, to replace stolen, lost or mutilated debt securities of such series, and to maintain paying agencies and certain provisions relating to the treatment of funds held by paying agents). We will be so discharged upon the deposit with the trustee, in trust, of money and/or U.S. Government Obligations or, in the case of debt securities denominated in a single currency other than U.S. dollars, Foreign Government Obligations, that, through the payment of interest and principal in accordance with their terms, will provide money in an amount sufficient in the opinion of a nationally recognized firm of independent public accountants to pay and discharge each installment of principal, premium and interest on and any mandatory sinking fund payments in respect of the debt securities of that series on the stated maturity of those payments in accordance with the terms of the indenture and those debt securities.

This discharge may occur only if, among other things, we have delivered to the trustee an officers' certificate and an opinion of counsel stating that we have received from, or there has been published by, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service a ruling or, since the date of execution of the indenture, there has been a change in the applicable U.S. federal income tax law, in either case to the effect that, and based thereon such opinion shall confirm that, the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize income, gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit, defeasance and discharge and will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the same amounts and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit, defeasance and discharge had not occurred.

Defeasance of Certain Covenants. The indenture provides that, unless otherwise provided by the terms of the applicable series of debt securities, upon compliance with certain conditions:

we may omit to comply with the covenant described under the heading "Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets" and certain other covenants set forth in the indenture, as well as any additional covenants which may be described in the applicable prospectus supplement; and

any omission to comply with those covenants will not constitute an event which, after notice or lapse of time, or both, would become an Event of Default or an Event of Default with respect to the debt securities of that series ("covenant defeasance").

The conditions include:

depositing with the trustee money and/or U.S. Government Obligations or, in the case of debt securities denominated in a single currency other than U.S. dollars, Foreign Government Obligations, that, through the payment of interest and principal in accordance with their terms, will provide money in an amount sufficient in the opinion of a nationally recognized firm of independent public accountants to pay and discharge each installment of principal of, premium and interest on and any mandatory sinking fund payments in respect of the debt securities of that series on the stated maturity of those payments in accordance with the terms of the indenture and those debt securities; and

delivering to the trustee an opinion of counsel to the effect that the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize income, gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit and related covenant defeasance and will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the same amounts and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit and related covenant defeasance had not occurred.

Covenant Defeasance and Events of Default. In the event we exercise our option to effect covenant defeasance with respect to any series of debt securities and the debt securities of that series are declared due and payable because of the occurrence of any Event of Default, the amount of money and/or U.S. Government Obligations or Foreign

Table of Contents

Government Obligations on deposit with the trustee will be sufficient to pay amounts due on the debt securities of that series at the time of their stated maturity but may not be sufficient to pay amounts due on the debt securities of that series at the time of the acceleration resulting from the Event of Default. However, we shall remain liable for those payments.

Certain Defined Terms

Foreign Government Obligations means, with respect to debt securities of any series that are denominated in a currency other than U.S. dollars:

direct obligations of the government that issued or caused to be issued such currency for the payment of which obligations its full faith and credit is pledged which are not callable or redeemable at the option of the issuer thereof; or

obligations of a person controlled or supervised by or acting as an agency or instrumentality of that government the timely payment of which is unconditionally guaranteed as a full faith and credit obligation by that government,

which, in either case are not callable or redeemable at the option of the issuer thereof.

U.S. Government Obligations means debt securities that are:

direct obligations of The United States of America for the payment of which its full faith and credit is pledged; or

obligations of a person controlled or supervised by and acting as an agency or instrumentality of The United States of America the payment of which is unconditionally guaranteed as full faith and credit obligation by The United States of America,

which, in either case, are not callable or redeemable at the option of the issuer itself and shall also include a depository receipt issued by a bank or trust company as custodian with respect to any such U.S. Government Obligation or a specific payment of interest on or principal of any such U.S. Government Obligation held by such custodian for the account of the holder of a depository receipt. Except as required by law, such custodian is not authorized to make any deduction from the amount payable to the holder of such depository receipt from any amount received by the custodian in respect of the U.S. Government Obligation evidenced by such depository receipt.

Governing Law

The indenture and the debt securities will be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the internal laws of the State of New York.

Table of Contents

Description of Units

We may issue units comprising one or more securities described in this prospectus in any combination. The following description sets forth certain general terms and provisions of the units that we may offer pursuant to this prospectus. The particular terms of the units and the extent, if any, to which the general terms and provisions may apply to the units so offered will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Each unit will be issued so that the holder of the unit also is the holder of each security included in the unit. Thus, the unit will have the rights and obligations of a holder of each included security. Units will be issued pursuant to the terms of a unit agreement, which may provide that the securities included in the unit may not be held or transferred separately at any time or at any time before a specified date. A copy of the forms of the unit agreement and the unit certificate relating to any particular issue of units will be filed with the SEC each time we issue units, and you should read those documents for provisions that may be important to you. For more information on how you can obtain copies of the forms of the unit agreement and the related unit certificate, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

The prospectus supplement relating to any particular issuance of units will describe the terms of those units, including, to the extent applicable, the following:

the designation and terms of the units and the securities comprising the units, including whether and under what circumstances those securities may be held or transferred separately;

any provision for the issuance, payment, settlement, transfer or exchange of the units or of the securities comprising the units; and

whether the units will be issued in fully registered or global form.

Table of Contents

Plan of Distribution

We may sell the offered securities in and outside the United States:

through underwriters or dealers;

directly to purchasers;

in a rights offering;

in at the market offerings, within the meaning of Rule 415(a)(4) of the Securities Act, to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market on an exchange or otherwise;

through agents; or

through a combination of any of these methods.

The prospectus supplement will include the following information:

the terms of the offering;

the names of any underwriters or agents;

the name or names of any managing underwriter or underwriters;

the purchase price or initial public offering price of the securities;

the net proceeds from the sale of the securities;

any delayed delivery arrangements;

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

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

any commissions paid to agents.

Sale through Underwriters or Dealers

If underwriters are used in the sale, 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 the time of sale. 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 certain 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.

If we offer securities in a subscription rights offering to our existing security holders, we may enter into a standby underwriting agreement with dealers, acting as standby underwriters. We may pay the standby underwriters a commitment fee for the securities they commit to purchase on a standby basis. If we do not enter into a standby underwriting agreement, we may retain a dealer-manager to manage a subscription rights offering for us.

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 may also 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.

Table of Contents

Some or all of the securities that we offer through this prospectus may be new issues of securities with no established trading market. Any underwriters to whom we sell our securities for public offering and sale may make a market in those securities, but they will not be obligated to do so and they may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. Accordingly, we cannot assure you of the liquidity of, or continued trading markets for, any securities that we offer.

If dealers are used 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. We will include in the prospectus supplement the names of the dealers and the terms of the transaction.

Direct Sales and Sales through Agents

We may sell the securities directly. In this case, no underwriters or agents would be involved. We may also sell the securities through agents designated from time to time at fixed prices or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. 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 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.

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 with respect to any sale of those securities. We will describe the terms of any sales of these securities in the prospectus supplement.

Remarketing Arrangements

Offered securities may also be offered and sold, if so indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, in connection with a remarketing upon their purchase, in accordance with a redemption or repayment pursuant to their terms, or otherwise, by one or more remarketing firms, acting as principals for their own accounts or as agents for us. Any remarketing firm will be identified and the terms of its agreements, if any, with us and its compensation will be described in the applicable 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.

General Information

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

Table of Contents

Legal Matters

Jones Day will pass upon the validity of the securities being offered hereby.

Experts

The financial statements, financial statement schedule and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting (which is included in Management's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting) incorporated in this Prospectus by reference to Olympic Steel, Inc.'s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

Table of Contents

The information in this preliminary prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This preliminary prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED OCTOBER 29, 2009

Prospectus

\$75,000,000

OLYMPIC STEEL, INC.

COMMON STOCK

On _____, 2009, we entered into an Open Market Sale Agreement with Jefferies & Company, Inc. relating to the common stock, without par value, offered by this prospectus.

In accordance with the terms of the Open Market Sale Agreement, we may offer and sell up to \$75,000,000 of our common stock from time to time through Jefferies & Company, Inc. as our sales agent. Sales of such common stock, if any, will be made by means of ordinary brokers' transactions on the NASDAQ Global Select Market at market prices.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol ZEUS. On October 28, 2009, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market was \$26.50 per share.

Investing in our common stock involves risks. Before investing in our common stock, you should carefully read the discussion of material risks of investing in our common stock on page A-1 of this prospectus under the heading Risk Factors, as well as the risk factors discussed in the documents we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and which we incorporate into this prospectus by reference.

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.

We will pay Jefferies & Company, Inc. a commission of 3.0% of the first \$37,500,000 of gross proceeds of any common stock sold through it pursuant to this prospectus and 2.5% of the remaining gross proceeds of any common stock sold through it pursuant to this prospectus. Jefferies & Company, Inc. will use its commercially reasonable efforts to place on our behalf any common stock to be offered by us under the Open Market Sale Agreement. The net proceeds from any sales under this prospectus will be used as described under Use of Proceeds herein. In connection with the sale of common stock on our behalf, Jefferies & Company, Inc. may be deemed an underwriter within the meaning of the Securities Act, and the compensation of the sales agent constitutes underwriting commissions. We have agreed to provide indemnification and contribution to Jefferies & Company, Inc. against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

Jefferies & Company

The date of this prospectus is _____, 2009.

Table of Contents

	Page
<u>About This Prospectus</u>	ii
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	ii
<u>Information We Incorporate By Reference</u>	ii
<u>Forward-Looking Information</u>	iii
<u>The Company</u>	A-1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	A-1
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	A-3
<u>Description of Common Stock</u>	A-4
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	A-6
<u>Legal Matters</u>	A-6
<u>Experts</u>	A-7

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or in any free writing prospectus that we may provide to you. We have not, and Jefferies & Company, Inc. has not, authorized anyone to provide you with different information, and you should not rely on any information not contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus or in any free writing prospectus that we may provide to you. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it.

We are not, and Jefferies & Company, Inc. is not, making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should not assume that the information appearing in this prospectus or any document incorporated by reference is accurate as of any date other than the date of the applicable document. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since that date. This prospectus does not constitute an offer, or an invitation on our behalf or on behalf of Jefferies & Company, Inc., to subscribe for and purchase, any of the securities and may not be used for or in connection with an offer or solicitation by anyone, in any jurisdiction in which such an offer or solicitation is not authorized or to any person to whom it is unlawful to make such an offer or solicitation. In case there are any differences or inconsistencies between this prospectus and the information incorporated by reference in herein, you should rely on the information in the document with the most recent date.

Table of Contents

About This Prospectus

This prospectus is a part of a registration statement that we filed with the SEC utilizing a shelf registration process.

Before you invest in our common stock, you should carefully read the registration statement (including the exhibits thereto) of which this prospectus forms a part, this prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus. The incorporated documents are described in this prospectus under **Where You Can Find More Information** and **Information We Incorporate By Reference**.

References in this prospectus to the terms **we**, **us**, **Olympic Steel** or **the Company** or other similar terms mean Olympic Steel, Inc. and its consolidated subsidiaries, unless we state otherwise or the context indicates otherwise.

Where You Can Find More Information

We are subject to the informational reporting requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. We file reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available over the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. You may read and copy any reports, statements and other information filed by us at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the Public Reference Room. You may also inspect our SEC reports and other information at the offices of NASDAQ Operations at 1735 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, or at our website at <http://www.olysteel.com>. The information contained on or accessible through our website is not a part of this prospectus, other than the documents that we file with the SEC that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

Information we Incorporate By Reference

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference into this prospectus the information in documents we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus, and information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information. Any statement contained in any document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in or omitted from this prospectus, or in any other subsequently filed document which also is deemed to be incorporated by reference herein, modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus.

We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and 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 until the completion of the offering of common stock described in this prospectus:

our annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008;

our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2009, June 30, 2009 and September 30, 2009;

our current reports on Form 8-K filed on April 7, 2009 and July 30, 2009;

Edgar Filing: OLYMPIC STEEL INC - Form S-3

the description of our common stock set forth in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on January 31, 1994, and all amendments and reports filed for the purpose of updating that description; and

the description of our Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock purchase rights under the Rights Agreement filed as Exhibit 4.1 to our Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on February 15, 2000, as amended by Amendment 1 to the Rights Agreement, filed as Exhibit 4.1 to our Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on September 19, 2008 (the Rights Agreement).

ii

Table of Contents

We will not, however, incorporate by reference in this prospectus any documents or portions thereof that are not deemed filed with the SEC, including any information furnished pursuant to Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of our current reports on Form 8-K unless, and except to the extent, specified in such current reports.

We will provide you with a copy of any of these filings (other than an exhibit to these filings, unless the exhibit is specifically incorporated by reference into the filing requested) at no cost, if you submit a request to us by writing or telephoning us at the following address and telephone number:

Olympic Steel, Inc.
5096 Richmond Road
Bedford Heights, Ohio 44146
Telephone Number: (216) 292-3800
Attention: Treasurer

Forward-Looking Information

This prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, contains statements that constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements may be identified by the use of predictive, future-tense or forward-looking terminology, such as believes, anticipates, expects, estimates, intends, may, will or similar terms. These statements speak as of the date of this prospectus or the date of the document incorporated by reference, as applicable, and we undertake no ongoing obligation, other than that imposed by law, to update these statements. These statements appear in a number of places in this prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, and relate to, among other things, our intent, belief or current expectations with respect to: our future financial condition, results of operations or prospects; our business and growth strategies; and our financing plans and forecasts. You are cautioned that any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve significant risks and uncertainties, and that actual results may differ materially from those contained in or implied by the forward-looking statements as a result of various factors, some of which are unknown, including, without limitation:

further deterioration of steel demand and steel pricing;

general and global business, economic, financial and political conditions, including the ongoing effects of the global credit crisis;

access to capital and global credit markets;

competitive factors such as availability and pricing of steel, industry shipping and inventory levels and rapid fluctuations in customer demand and steel pricing;

the cyclical and volatility within the steel industry;

the ability of customers (especially those that may be highly leveraged, those in the domestic automotive industry and those with inadequate liquidity) to maintain their credit availability;

customer, supplier, and competitor consolidation, bankruptcy or insolvency, especially those in the domestic automotive industry;

reduced production schedules, layoffs or work stoppages by our own or our suppliers or customers personnel;

the availability and costs of transportation and logistical services;

equipment installation delays or malfunctions;

the amounts, successes and our ability to continue our capital investments and our business information system project;

the successes of our strategic efforts and initiatives to increase sales volumes, maintain or improve working capital turnover and free cash flows, reduce costs, inventory and debt in a declining market, while improving customer service;

the timing and outcome of inventory lower of cost or market adjustments;

iii

Table of Contents

the adequacy of our existing information technology and business system software;

the successful implementation of our new enterprise-wide information system;

the timing and outcome of Olympic Laser Processing s (a joint venture in which we and the United States Steel Corporation each own 50%) efforts and ability to liquidate its remaining assets;

our ability to pay regular quarterly cash dividends and the amounts and timing of any future dividends; and

our ability to generate free cash flow through operations, reduce inventory and to repay debt within anticipated timeframes.

Table of Contents

The Company

We are a leading U.S. steel service center with over 55 years of experience. Our primary focus is on the direct sale and distribution of large volumes of processed carbon, coated and stainless flat-rolled sheet, coil and plate products. We act as an intermediary between steel producers and manufacturers that require processed steel for their operations. We serve customers in most carbon steel consuming industries, including manufacturers and fabricators of transportation and material handling equipment, construction and farm machinery, storage tanks, environmental and energy generation, automobiles, food service and electrical equipment, military vehicles and equipment, as well as general and plate fabricators and steel service centers. We distribute our products primarily through a direct sales force.

We operate as a single business segment with strategically-located processing and distribution facilities located throughout the United States. Our geographic footprint allows us to focus on regional customers and larger national and multi-national accounts, primarily located throughout the midwestern, eastern and southern United States.

Corporate Information

We are incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio. Our principal executive offices are located at 5096 Richmond Road, Bedford Heights, Ohio 44146. Our telephone number is (216) 292-3800. Our website is <http://www.olysteel.com>. The information contained on or accessible through our website is not part of this prospectus, other than the documents that we file with the SEC that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

Risk Factors

Investing in our common stock involves risk. Prior to making a decision about investing in our common stock, in addition to the risks related to our common stock set forth below, you should carefully consider the specific factors discussed under the heading Risk Factors in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K and in our most recent quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, which are incorporated herein by reference and may be amended, supplemented or superseded from time to time by other reports we file with the SEC in the future. The risks and uncertainties we have described are not the only ones we face. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our operations. If any of these risks actually occurs, our business, results of operations and financial condition could suffer. In that case, the trading price of our securities could decline, and you could lose all or a part of your investment.

The market price for our common stock may be volatile.

Historically, there has been volatility in the market price for our common stock. Furthermore, the market price of our common stock could fluctuate substantially in the future in response to a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the risk factors described herein. Examples include:

- announcement of our quarterly operating results or the operating results of other steel service centers;
- changes in financial estimates or recommendations by stock market analysts regarding us or our competitors;
- the operating and stock performance of other companies that investors may deem comparable;
- developments affecting us, our customers or our suppliers;

press releases, earnings releases or publicity relating to us or our competitors or relating to trends in the metals service center industry;

inability to meet securities analysts' and investors' quarterly or annual estimates or targets of our performance;

sales of our common stock by large shareholders;

general domestic or international economic, market and political conditions;

changes in the legal or regulatory environment affecting our business; and

announcements by us or our competitors of significant acquisitions, dispositions or joint ventures, or other material events impacting the domestic or global steel industry.

A-1

Table of Contents

Recently, the stock market has experienced significant price and volume fluctuations. This volatility has had a significant effect on the market prices of securities issued by many companies for reasons unrelated to their specific operating performance. These broad market fluctuations may materially adversely affect our stock price, regardless of our operating results.

These factors may adversely affect the trading price of our common stock, regardless of our actual operating performance. In addition, stock markets from time to time experience extreme price and volume fluctuations that may be unrelated or disproportionate to the operating performance of companies. In the past, some shareholders have brought securities class action lawsuits against companies following periods of volatility in the market price of their securities. We may in the future be the target of similar litigation. Securities litigation, regardless of whether our defense is ultimately successful, could result in substantial costs and divert management's attention and resources.

Our quarterly results may be volatile.

Our operating results have varied on a quarterly basis during our operating history and are likely to fluctuate significantly in the future. Our operating results may be below the expectations of our investors or stock market analysts as a result of a variety of factors, many of which are outside of our control. Factors that may affect our quarterly operating results include, but are not limited to, the risk factors listed above.

Many factors could cause our revenues and operating results to vary significantly in the future. Accordingly, we believe that quarter-to-quarter comparisons of our operating results are not necessarily meaningful. Investors should not rely on the results of one quarter as an indication of our future performance. Further, it is our practice not to provide forward-looking sales or earnings guidance and not to endorse any analyst's sales or earnings estimates. Nonetheless, if our results of operations in any quarter do not meet analysts' expectations, our stock price could materially decrease.

The Rights Agreement and certain provisions in our charter documents and Ohio law could delay or prevent a change in management or a takeover attempt that you may consider to be in your best interest.

We have adopted certain anti-takeover provisions, including the Rights Agreement. The Rights Agreement will cause substantial dilution to any person who attempts to acquire us in a manner or on terms not approved by our board of directors.

We are subject to Chapter 1704 of the Ohio Revised Code, which prohibits certain business combinations and transactions between an issuing public corporation and an Ohio law interested shareholder for at least three years after the Ohio law interested shareholder attains 10% ownership, unless the Board of Directors of the issuing public corporation approves the transaction before the Ohio law interested shareholder attains 10% ownership. We are also subject to Section 1701.831 of the Ohio Revised Code, which provides that certain notice and informational filings and special shareholder meeting and voting procedures must be followed prior to consummation of a proposed control share acquisition. Assuming compliance with the notice and information filings prescribed by the statute, a proposed control share acquisition may be made only if the acquisition is approved by at least a majority of the voting power of the issuer represented at the meeting and at least a majority of the voting power remaining after excluding the combined voting power of the interested shares.

Certain provisions contained in our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Code of Regulations and Ohio law could delay or prevent the removal of directors and other management and could make a merger, tender offer or proxy contest involving us that you may consider to be in your best interest more difficult. For example, these provisions:

allow our board of directors to issue preferred stock without shareholder approval;

provide for our board of directors to be divided into two classes of directors serving staggered terms;

limit who can call a special meeting of shareholders; and

establish advance notice requirements for nomination for election to the board of directors or for proposing matters to be acted upon at shareholders meetings.

A-2

Table of Contents

In addition, our revolving credit facility contains limitations on our ability to enter into change of control transactions.

These provisions may discourage potential takeover attempts, discourage bids for our common stock at a premium over market price or adversely affect the market price of, and the voting and other rights of the holders of, our common stock. These provisions could also discourage proxy contests and make it more difficult for you and other shareholders to elect directors other than the candidates nominated by our board of directors.

Principal shareholders who own a significant number of shares of our common stock may have interests that conflict with yours.

Michael Siegal, our chief executive officer, chairman of the board and largest shareholder, owns approximately 11.8% of our outstanding common stock as of October 29, 2009. Mr. Siegal may have the ability to significantly influence matters requiring shareholder approval. In deciding how to vote on such matters, Mr. Siegal may be influenced by interests that conflict with yours.

Use of Proceeds

We intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of our common stock pursuant to the Open Market Sale Agreement for working capital and general corporate purposes including, but not limited to:

- reduction or refinancing of outstanding indebtedness or other corporate obligations;
- additions to working capital;
- capital expenditures; and
- acquisitions.

Pending any specific application, we may initially invest funds in short-term marketable securities or apply them to the reduction of short-term indebtedness.

Table of Contents

Description of Common Stock

General

Our Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation authorize us to issue up to 25,000,000 shares of capital stock, including:

20,000,000 shares of common stock, without par value; and

5,000,000 shares of Serial Preferred Stock, without par value, which we refer to as Serial Preferred Shares, consisting of 2,500,000 voting Serial Preferred Shares and 2,500,000 non-voting Serial Preferred Shares.

As of October 29, 2009, 10,883,213 shares of our common stock were issued and outstanding.

Common Stock

Each outstanding share of common stock is entitled to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders, and there are no cumulative voting rights. Our Amended and Restated Code of Regulations provide for our Board of Directors to be divided into two classes of directors serving staggered terms.

Subject to the rights of holders of any outstanding Serial Preferred Shares, each record holder of common stock on the applicable record date is entitled to receive dividends on such common stock to the extent authorized by our Board of Directors out of assets legally available for the payment of dividends. In addition, subject to the rights of holders of any outstanding Serial Preferred Shares, holders of common stock are entitled to share ratably in our assets legally available for distribution to our shareholders in the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up after payment of or adequate provision for all our known debts and liabilities.

Holders of common stock do not have any preemptive rights to subscribe for any of our securities. No conversion, redemption or sinking fund provisions apply to the common stock, and the holders of common stock are not liable to further calls or assessments by us.

Shareholder Rights Plan

Under the terms of the Rights Agreement, one preferred share purchase right, which we refer to as a Right, is associated with each share of common stock. Until the occurrence of specified events described in the Rights Agreement, the Rights are not exercisable, are evidenced by the certificates for our common stock and may be transferred only with our common stock. The Rights will expire on March 6, 2010, unless earlier redeemed, exchanged or amended.

Each Right entitles the registered holder to purchase from us one one-hundredth of a share of Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock, without par value, at a price of \$170.00 per one one-hundredth of a preferred share. The Rights Agreement also provides, subject to specified exceptions and limitations, that common stock issued or delivered from our treasury after the record date will be accompanied by a right. The Rights are in all respects subject to and governed by the provisions of the Rights Agreement.

Control Share Acquisitions

Section 1701.831 of the Ohio Revised Code provides that certain notice and informational filings and special shareholder meeting and voting procedures must be followed prior to consummation of a proposed control share acquisition. The Ohio Revised Code defines a control share acquisition as any acquisition of an issuer's shares which would entitle the acquirer, immediately after that acquisition, directly or indirectly, to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power of the issuer in the election of directors within any one of the following ranges of that voting power:

one-fifth or more but less than one-third of that voting power;

one-third or more but less than a majority of that voting power; or

a majority or more of that voting power.

A-4

Table of Contents

Assuming compliance with the notice and information filings prescribed by the statute, the proposed control share acquisition may be made only if, at a special meeting of shareholders, the acquisition is approved by at least a majority of the voting power of the issuer represented at the meeting and at least a majority of the voting power remaining after excluding the combined voting power of the interested shares. Interested shares are the shares held by the intended acquirer and the employee-directors and officers of the issuer, as well as certain shares that were acquired after the date of the first public disclosure of the acquisition but before the record date for the meeting of shareholders and shares that were transferred, together with the voting power thereof, after the record date for the meeting of shareholders.

Business Combinations with Certain Persons

We are subject to Chapter 1704 of the Ohio Revised Code, which prohibits certain business combinations and transactions between an issuing public corporation and an Ohio law interested shareholder for at least three years after the Ohio law interested shareholder attains 10% ownership, unless the Board of Directors of the issuing public corporation approves the transaction before the Ohio law interested shareholder attains 10% ownership. An issuing public corporation is an Ohio corporation with 50 or more shareholders that has its principal place of business, principal executive offices, or substantial assets within the State of Ohio, and as to which no close corporation agreement exists. An Ohio law interested shareholder is a beneficial owner of 10% or more of the shares of a corporation. Examples of transactions regulated by Chapter 1704 include the disposition of assets, mergers and consolidations, voluntary dissolutions and the transfer of shares.

Subsequent to the three-year period, a transaction subject to Chapter 1704 may take place provided that certain conditions are satisfied, including:

prior to the interested shareholder's share acquisition date, the board of directors approved the purchase of shares by the interested shareholder;

the transaction is approved by the holders of shares with at least 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the voting power of the corporation (or a different proportion set forth in the articles of incorporation), including at least a majority of the outstanding shares after excluding shares controlled by the Ohio law interested shareholder; or

the business combination results in shareholders, other than the Ohio law interested shareholder, receiving a fair price plus interest for their shares.

Chapter 1704 is applicable to all corporations formed under Ohio law.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

Mellon Investor Services LLC serves as the transfer agent and registrar for our common stock.

Table of Contents

Plan of Distribution

We have entered into a Open Market Sale Agreement with Jefferies & Company, Inc. as our sales agent under which we may offer and sell from time to time through the third anniversary of the effective date of the Open Market Sale Agreement, up to an aggregate initial offering price of \$75,000,000 of our common stock through the sales agent. Sales of our common stock, if any, will be made (i) in privately negotiated transactions, (ii) as crosses, (iii) as block transactions or (iv) by any other method or payment permitted by law deemed to be an at the market offering as defined in Rule 415 under the Securities Act, including sales made directly on the NASDAQ Global Select Market or sales made to or through a market maker or through an electronic communications network. We will not engage in any transactions that stabilize our common stock.

Jefferies & Company, Inc. will offer our common stock subject to the terms and conditions of the Open Market Sale Agreement. We will designate the minimum price per share at which the common stock may be sold and the maximum amount of common stock to be sold through the sales agent during any selling period or otherwise determine such maximum amount together with the sales agent. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Open Market Sale Agreement, Jefferies & Company, Inc. has agreed to use its commercially reasonable efforts to execute our orders to sell, as our sales agent and on our behalf, our common stock submitted to Jefferies & Company, Inc. from time to time pursuant to and subject to the terms of the Open Market Sale Agreement. We or Jefferies & Company, Inc. may suspend the offering of common stock under the Open Market Sale Agreement by proper notice to the other party.

We will pay Jefferies & Company, Inc. a commission of 3.0% of the first \$37,500,000 of gross proceeds of any common stock sold through it pursuant to this prospectus and 2.5% of the remaining gross proceeds of any common stock sold through it pursuant to this prospectus. We estimate that the total remaining expenses of the offering payable by us, other than such commissions, will be approximately \$100,000. The remaining sales proceeds, after deducting any other transaction fees, will equal our net proceeds for the sale of such stock.

Settlement for sales of common stock will occur, unless the parties agree otherwise, on the third trading day following the date on which any sales were made against payment of the net proceeds to us. A trading day is any trading day on the NASDAQ Global Select Market.

In connection with the sale of the common stock on our behalf, the sales agent may be deemed to be an underwriter within the meaning of the Securities Act, and the compensation paid to the sales agent may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts. We have agreed in the Open Market Sale Agreement to provide indemnification and contribution to the sales agent against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

The sales agent and its affiliates have performed investment banking and advisory services for us from time to time for which they have received customary fees and expenses. The sales agent and its affiliates may, from time to time in the future, engage in transactions with and perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

The offering of common stock pursuant to the Open Market Sale Agreement will terminate upon the earlier of (i) the sale of all of the shares of common stock subject to the Open Market Sale Agreement, (ii) the third anniversary of the effective date of the Open Market Sale Agreement and (iii) the termination of the Open Market Sale Agreement, pursuant to its terms.

Legal Matters

Jones Day will pass upon the validity of the common stock being offered hereby. Certain legal matters in connection with this offering may be passed upon for the sales agent by Proskauer Rose LLP, Los Angeles, California.

A-6

Table of Contents

Experts

The financial statements, financial statement schedule and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting (which is included in Management's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting) incorporated in this Prospectus by reference to Olympic Steel, Inc.'s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

A-7

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

The following are the estimated expenses of the issuance and distribution of the securities being registered, all of which are payable by us. All of the items below, except for the registration fee, are estimates.

Securities and Exchange Commission registration fee	\$ 11,160
Trustee's fees and expenses	*
Transfer agent and registrar fees	*
Printing expenses	*
Accountant's fees and expenses	*
Legal fees and expenses	*
Miscellaneous	*
Total	\$ *

* Estimated expenses are presently not known and cannot be estimated.

Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers.

Under Section 1701.13 of the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio corporations are authorized to indemnify directors, officers, employees and agents within prescribed limits and must indemnify them under certain circumstances. Ohio law does not provide statutory authorization for a corporation to indemnify directors, officers, employees and agents for settlements, fines or judgments in the context of derivative suits. However, it provides that directors (but not officers, employees or agents) are entitled to mandatory advancement of expenses, including attorneys' fees, incurred in defending any action, including derivative actions, brought against the director, provided that the director agrees to cooperate with the corporation concerning the matter and to repay the amount advanced if it is proved by clear and convincing evidence that the director's act or failure to act was done with deliberate intent to cause injury to the corporation or with reckless disregard for the corporation's best interests.

Ohio law does not authorize payment of judgments to a director, officer, employee or agent after a finding of negligence or misconduct in a derivative suit absent a court order. Indemnification is permitted, however, to the extent such person succeeds on the merits. In all other cases, if a director, officer, employee or agent acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to be the best interests of the corporation, indemnification is discretionary except as otherwise provided by a corporation's articles, code of regulations or by contract except with respect to the advancement of expenses of directors.

Under Ohio law, a director is not liable for monetary damages unless it is proved by clear and convincing evidence that his action or failure to act was undertaken with deliberate intent to cause injury to the corporation or with reckless disregard for the best interests of the corporation. There is, however, no comparable provision limiting the liability of officers, employees or agents of a corporation. The statutory right to indemnification is not exclusive in Ohio, and Ohio corporations may, among other things, procure insurance for such persons.

Section 1701.13 of the Ohio Revised Code authorizes a corporation to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of the corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the corporation as a director, trustee, officer, employee, member, manager or agent of another corporation or enterprise, against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the corporation would otherwise have the power to indemnify him under Section 1701.13.

Under certain circumstances provided in Article V of our Amended and Restated Code of Regulations and subject to Section 1701.13 of the Ohio Revised Code (which sets forth the conditions and limitations governing the indemnification of officers and directors), we will indemnify any of our current or former directors or officers

II-1

Table of Contents

against losses, damages, or liabilities reasonably incurred by that director or officer in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative. We maintain liability insurance for all of our directors and officers. The insurance also insures the Company against amounts payable to indemnify directors and officers, subject to policy limits and retention amounts.

Item 16. Exhibits.

The following documents are exhibits to the registration statement:

Exhibit Number	Description
1.1*	Form of Underwriting Agreement.
1.2	Form of Open Market Sale Agreement by and between Olympic Steel, Inc. and Jefferies & Company, Inc.
4.1	Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of Olympic Steel, Inc. (filed as Exhibit 3.1(i) to the Registration Statement on Form S-1 (No. 033-73992) filed with the Commission on January 12, 1994), incorporated herein by reference.
4.2	Amended and Restated Code of Regulations of Olympic Steel, Inc. (filed as Exhibit 4.2 to the Registration Statement on Form S-8 (No. 333-1439001) filed June 20, 2007), incorporated herein by reference.
4.3	Form of Debt Securities Indenture.
4.4*	Form of Debt Securities.
4.5*	Preferred Stock Certificate of Designations.
4.6*	Form of Warrant Agreement.
4.7*	Form of Warrant Certificate.
4.8*	Form of Depositary Agreement.
4.9*	Form of Depositary Receipt.
4.10*	Form of Subscription Rights Certificate.
4.11*	Form of Unit Agreement.
4.12*	Form of Unit Certificate.
5.1	Opinion of Jones Day.
12.1	Calculation of Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges.
23.1	Consent of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm.
23.2	Consent of Jones Day (included in Exhibit 5.1 to this Registration Statement).
25.1	Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility under Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of Trustee under Debt Securities Indenture.

* To be filed either by amendment or as an exhibit to a report filed under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and incorporated herein by reference.

Item 17. Undertakings.

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

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

- (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;
- (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities

II-2

Table of Contents

offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee table in the effective registration statement; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. That, for the purpose of determining liability of the registrant under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities the undersigned registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, the undersigned registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

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

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

II-3

Table of Contents

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

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

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

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes to supplement the prospectus, after the expiration of the subscription period, to set forth the results of the subscription offer, the transactions by the underwriters during the subscription period, the amount of unsubscribed securities to be purchased by the underwriters, and the terms of any subsequent reoffering thereof. If any public offering by the underwriters is to be made on terms differing from those set forth on the cover page of the prospectus, a post-effective amendment will be filed to set forth the terms of such offering.

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

Table of Contents

Signatures

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Bedford Heights, State of Ohio, on October 29, 2009.

OLYMPIC STEEL, INC.

By: /s/ Michael D. Siegal

Michael D. Siegal
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement on Form S-3 has been signed below by the following persons in the capacities indicated as of October 29, 2009:

Signatures	Title
/s/ Michael D. Siegal Michael D. Siegal	Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer)
/s/ David A. Wolfort David A. Wolfort	President, Chief Operating Officer and Director
/s/ Richard T. Marabito Richard T. Marabito	Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial Officer and Principal Accounting Officer)
Arthur F. Anton	Director
/s/ Martin H. Elrad Martin H. Elrad	Director
/s/ Ralph M. Della Ratta Ralph M. Della Ratta	Director
/s/ Howard L. Goldstein Howard L. Goldstein	Director
/s/ James B. Meathe	Director

James B. Meathe

II-5

Table of Contents

Index to Exhibits

Exhibit Number	Description
1.1*	Form of Underwriting Agreement.
1.2	Form of Open Market Sale Agreement by and between Olympic Steel, Inc. and Jefferies & Company, Inc.
4.1	Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of Olympic Steel, Inc. (filed as Exhibit 3.1(i) to the Registration Statement on Form S-1 (No. 033-73992) filed with the Commission on January 12, 1994), incorporated herein by reference.
4.2	Amended and Restated Code of Regulations of Olympic Steel, Inc. (filed as Exhibit 4.2 to the Registration Statement on Form S-8 (No. 333-1439001) filed June 20, 2007), incorporated herein by reference.
4.3	Form of Debt Securities Indenture.
4.4*	Form of Debt Securities.
4.5*	Preferred Stock Certificate of Designations.
4.6*	Form of Warrant Agreement.
4.7*	Form of Warrant Certificate.
4.8*	Form of Depositary Agreement.
4.9*	Form of Depositary Receipt.
4.10*	Form of Subscription Rights Certificate.
4.11*	Form of Unit Agreement.
4.12*	Form of Unit Certificate.
5.1	Opinion of Jones Day.
12.1	Calculation of Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges.
23.1	Consent of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm.
23.2	Consent of Jones Day (included in Exhibit 5.1 to this Registration Statement).
25.1	Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility under Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of Trustee under Debt Securities Indenture.

* To be filed either by amendment or as an exhibit to a report filed under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and incorporated herein by reference.