

CHESAPEAKE ENERGY CORP
Form 8-K
November 28, 2006
UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d)

of the

Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported)

November 28, 2006 (November 27, 2006)

CHESAPEAKE ENERGY CORPORATION

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its Charter)

Oklahoma

(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation)

1-13726

(Commission File No.)

73-1395733

(IRS Employer Identification No.)

6100 North Western Avenue, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

(Address of principal executive offices)

73118

(Zip Code)

(405) 848-8000

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions (see General Instruction A.2. below):

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))

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Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act
(17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Section 8 Other Events

Item 8.01 Other Events.

On November 27, 2006, Chesapeake Energy Corporation filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission a Registration Statement on Form S-3 (File No. 333-138966), which contained a preliminary prospectus of the same date for the offering of Euro-denominated senior notes. The preliminary prospectus contains risk factors related to Chesapeake's business, some of which have been updated from prior reports with recently available information. These updated risk factors are included in this report below in their entirety. The preliminary prospectus also contains a description of other developments regarding Chesapeake's internal review of its practices in granting employee and executive stock options, which description is also included in this report following the updated risk factors.

Risks Relating to Our Business

Oil and gas prices are volatile. A decline in prices could adversely affect our financial position, financial results, cash flows, access to capital and ability to grow.

Our revenues, operating results, profitability and future rate of growth depend primarily upon the prices we receive for the oil and gas we sell. Prices also affect the amount of cash flow available for capital expenditures and our ability to borrow money or raise additional capital. The amount we can borrow from banks is subject to periodic redeterminations based on prices specified by our bank group at the time of redetermination. In addition, we may have ceiling test write-downs in the future if prices fall significantly.

Historically, the markets for oil and gas have been volatile and they are likely to continue to be volatile. Wide fluctuations in oil and gas prices may result from relatively minor changes in the supply of and demand for oil and natural gas, market uncertainty and other factors that are beyond our control, including:

- worldwide and United States supplies of oil and gas;
- weather conditions;
- the level of consumer demand;
- the price and availability of alternative fuels;
- the proximity and capacity of natural gas pipelines and other transportation facilities;
- the price and level of imports in the United States;
- United States and non-United States governmental regulations and taxes;
- the ability of the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to agree to and maintain oil price and production controls;
- political instability or armed conflict in oil-producing regions; and
- overall United States and global economic conditions.

These factors and the volatility of the energy markets make it extremely difficult to predict future oil and gas price movements with any certainty. Declines in oil and natural gas prices would not only reduce revenue, but could reduce the amount of oil and gas that we can produce economically and, as a result,

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could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition, results of operations and reserves. Further, oil and gas prices do not necessarily move in tandem. Because approximately 92% of our reserves at December 31, 2005 were natural gas reserves, we are more affected by movements in natural gas prices.

Our level of indebtedness and preferred stock may adversely affect operations and limit our growth, and we may have difficulty making debt service payments on our indebtedness as such payments become due.

As of September 30, 2006, we had long-term indebtedness of approximately \$7.9 billion, with \$1.5 billion of outstanding borrowings drawn under our revolving bank credit facility. Our long-term indebtedness represented 44% of our total book capitalization at September 30, 2006. As of November 22, 2006, we had approximately \$2.079 billion outstanding under our revolving bank credit facility. We expect to continue to be highly leveraged in the foreseeable future.

Our level of indebtedness and preferred stock affects our operations in several ways, including the following:

- a portion of our cash flows from operating activities must be used to service our indebtedness and pay dividends on our preferred stock and is not available for other purposes;
- we may be at a competitive disadvantage as compared to similar companies that have less debt;
- the covenants contained in the agreements governing our outstanding indebtedness and future indebtedness may limit our ability to borrow additional funds, pay dividends and make certain investments and may also affect our flexibility in planning for, and reacting to, changes in the economy and in our industry;
- additional financing in the future for working capital, capital expenditures, acquisitions, general corporate or other purposes may have higher costs and more restrictive covenants;

- changes in the credit ratings of our debt may negatively affect the cost, terms, conditions and availability of future financing, and lower ratings will increase the interest rate and fees we pay on our revolving bank credit facility; and
- we may be more vulnerable to general adverse economic and industry conditions.

We may incur additional debt, including significant secured indebtedness, or issue additional series of preferred stock in order to make future acquisitions or to develop our properties. A higher level of indebtedness and/or additional preferred stock increases the risk that we may default on our obligations. Our ability to meet our debt obligations and to reduce our level of indebtedness depends on our future performance. General economic conditions, oil and gas prices and financial, business and other factors affect our operations and our future performance. Many of these factors are beyond our control. We may not be able to generate sufficient cash flow to pay the interest on our debt, and future working capital, borrowings or equity financing may not be available to pay or refinance such debt. Factors that will affect our ability to raise cash through an offering of our capital stock or a refinancing of our debt include financial market conditions, the value of our assets and our performance at the time we need capital.

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In addition, our bank borrowing base is subject to periodic redetermination. A lowering of our borrowing base could require us to repay indebtedness in excess of the borrowing base, or we might need to further secure the lenders with additional collateral.

Competition in the oil and natural gas industry is intense, and many of our competitors have greater financial and other resources than we do.

We operate in the highly competitive areas of oil and natural gas acquisition, development, exploitation, exploration and production. We face intense competition from both major and other independent oil and natural gas companies in each of the following areas:

seeking to acquire desirable producing properties or new leases for future exploration; and
seeking to acquire the equipment and expertise necessary to develop and operate our properties.

Many of our competitors have financial and other resources substantially greater than ours, and some of them are fully integrated oil companies. These companies may be able to pay more for development prospects and productive oil and natural gas properties and may be able to define, evaluate, bid for and purchase a greater number of properties and prospects than our financial or human resources permit. Our ability to develop and exploit our oil and natural gas properties and to acquire additional properties in the future will depend upon our ability to successfully conduct operations, evaluate and select suitable properties and consummate transactions in this highly competitive environment.

Significant capital expenditures are required to replace our reserves.

Our exploration, development and acquisition activities require substantial capital expenditures. Historically, we have funded our capital expenditures through a combination of cash flows from operations, our revolving bank credit facility and debt and equity issuances. Future cash flows are subject to a number of variables, such as the level of production from existing wells, prices of oil and gas, and our success in developing and producing new reserves. If revenues were to decrease as a result of lower oil and gas prices or decreased production, and our access to capital were limited, we would have a reduced ability to replace our reserves. If our cash flow from operations is not sufficient to fund our capital expenditure budget, we may not be able to access additional bank debt, debt or equity or other methods of financing on an economic basis to meet these requirements.

If we are not able to replace reserves, we may not be able to sustain production.

Our future success depends largely upon our ability to find, develop or acquire additional oil and gas reserves that are economically recoverable. Unless we replace the reserves we produce through successful development, exploration or acquisition activities, our proved reserves and production will decline over time. In addition, approximately 35% of our total estimated proved reserves (by volume) at December 31, 2005 were undeveloped. By their nature, estimates of undeveloped reserves are less certain. Recovery of such reserves will require significant capital expenditures and successful drilling operations. Our reserve estimates reflect that our production rate on producing properties will decline approximately 24% from 2006 to 2007. Thus, our future oil and natural gas reserves and production and, therefore, our cash flow and income are highly dependent on our success in efficiently developing and exploiting our current reserves and economically finding or acquiring additional recoverable reserves.

The actual quantities and present value of our proved reserves may prove to be lower than we have estimated.

This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein contain estimates of our proved reserves and the estimated future net revenues from our proved reserves. These estimates are based upon various assumptions, including assumptions required by the SEC relating to oil and gas prices,

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drilling and operating expenses, capital expenditures, taxes and availability of funds. The process of estimating oil and gas reserves is complex. The process involves significant decisions and assumptions in the evaluation of available geological, geophysical, engineering and economic data for each reservoir. Therefore, these estimates are inherently imprecise.

Actual future production, oil and gas prices, revenues, taxes, development expenditures, operating expenses and quantities of recoverable oil and gas reserves most likely will vary from these estimates. Such variations may be significant and could materially affect the estimated quantities and present value of our proved reserves. In addition, we may adjust estimates of proved reserves to reflect production history, results of exploration and development drilling, prevailing oil and gas prices and other factors, many of which are beyond our control. Our properties may also be susceptible to hydrocarbon drainage from production by operators on adjacent properties.

At December 31, 2005, approximately 35% of our estimated proved reserves (by volume) were undeveloped. Recovery of undeveloped reserves requires significant capital expenditures and successful drilling operations. These reserve estimates include the assumption that we will make significant capital expenditures to develop the reserves, including approximately \$1.8 billion in 2006. You should be aware that the estimated costs may not be accurate, development may not occur as scheduled and results may not be as estimated.

You should not assume that the present values referred to in this prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein represent the current market value of our estimated oil and gas reserves. In accordance with SEC requirements, the estimates of our present values are based on prices and costs as of the date of the estimates. The December 31, 2005 present value is based on weighted average oil and natural gas wellhead prices of \$56.41 per barrel of oil and \$8.76 per mcf of natural gas. Actual future prices and costs may be materially higher or lower than the prices and costs as of the date of an estimate.

Any changes in consumption by oil and natural gas purchasers or in governmental regulations or taxation will also affect actual future net cash flows.

The timing of both the production and the expenses from the development and production of oil and gas properties will affect both the timing of actual future net cash flows from our proved reserves and their present value. In addition, the 10% discount factor, which is required by the SEC to be used in calculating discounted future net cash flows for reporting purposes, is not necessarily the most accurate discount factor. The effective interest rate at various times and the risks associated with our business or the oil and natural gas industry in general will affect the accuracy of the 10% discount factor.

Acquisitions may prove to be worth less than we paid because of uncertainties in evaluating recoverable reserves and potential liabilities.

Our recent growth is due in large part to acquisitions of exploration and production companies, producing properties and undeveloped leasehold. We expect acquisitions will also contribute to our future growth. Successful acquisitions require an assessment of a number of factors, including estimates of recoverable reserves, exploration potential, future oil and gas prices, operating costs and potential environmental and other liabilities. Such assessments are inexact and their accuracy is inherently uncertain. In connection with our assessments, we perform a review of the acquired properties which we believe is generally consistent with industry practices. However, such a review will not reveal all existing or potential problems. In addition, our review may not permit us to become sufficiently familiar with the properties to fully assess their deficiencies and capabilities. We do not inspect every well. Even when we inspect a well, we do not always discover structural, subsurface and environmental problems that may exist or arise. We are generally not entitled to contractual indemnification for preclosing liabilities, including environmental liabilities. Normally, we acquire interests in properties on an as is basis with limited remedies for breaches of representations and warranties. As a result of these factors, we may not be able

to acquire oil and gas properties that contain economically recoverable reserves or be able to complete such acquisitions on acceptable terms.

As new owners, we may not effectively consolidate and integrate acquired operations, particularly when we make significant acquisitions outside our historical operating areas.

Significant acquisitions present operational and administrative challenges that may prove more difficult than anticipated. The failure to consolidate functions and integrate procedures, personnel and operations in an effective and timely manner may adversely affect our business and results of operations, at least temporarily. Significant acquisitions can change the nature of our operations and business depending upon the character of the acquired properties, which may have substantially different operating and geological characteristics or be in different geographic locations than our existing properties. To the extent that we acquire properties substantially different from the properties in our primary operating areas or acquire properties that require different technical expertise, we may not be able to realize the economic benefits of these acquisitions as efficiently as in our prior acquisitions.

Exploration and development drilling may not result in commercially productive reserves.

We do not always encounter commercially productive reservoirs through our drilling operations. The new wells we drill or participate in may not be productive and we may not recover all or any portion of our investment in wells we drill or participate in. The seismic data and other technologies we use do not allow us to know conclusively prior to drilling a well that oil or gas is present or may be produced economically. The cost of drilling, completing and operating a well is often uncertain, and cost factors can adversely affect the economics of a project. Our efforts will be unprofitable if we drill dry wells or wells that are productive but do not produce enough reserves to return a profit after drilling, operating and other costs. Further, our drilling operations may be curtailed, delayed or canceled as a result of a variety of factors, including:

- increases in the cost of, or shortages or delays in the availability of, drilling rigs and equipment;
- unexpected drilling conditions;
- title problems;
- pressure or irregularities in formations;
- equipment failures or accidents;
- adverse weather conditions; and
- compliance with environmental and other governmental requirements.

Future price declines may result in a write-down of our asset carrying values.

We utilize the full cost method of accounting for costs related to our oil and gas properties. Under this method, all such costs (for both productive and nonproductive properties) are capitalized and amortized on an aggregate basis over the estimated lives of the properties using the unit-of-production method. However, these capitalized costs are subject to a ceiling test which limits such pooled costs to the aggregate of the present value of future net revenues attributable to proved oil and natural gas reserves discounted at 10% plus the lower of cost or market value of unproved properties. The full cost ceiling is evaluated at the end of each quarter using the prices for oil and gas at that date, adjusted for the impact of derivatives accounted for as cash flow hedges. A significant decline in oil and gas prices from current levels, or other factors, without other mitigating circumstances, could cause a future writedown of capitalized costs and a non-cash charge against future earnings.

At December 31, 2005, our net book value of oil and natural gas properties less deferred income taxes was below the calculated ceiling by approximately \$6.5 billion. From December 31, 2005 to September 30, 2006, spot natural gas prices decreased by approximately 59% from \$10.08 to \$4.18 per mcf. As a result, as of September 30, 2006, our ceiling test calculation indicated an impairment of our oil and natural gas properties of approximately \$415 million. However, natural gas prices subsequent to September 30, 2006 have improved sufficiently to eliminate this calculated impairment. As a result, we were not required to record a write-down of our oil and natural gas properties under the full-cost method of accounting in the third quarter of 2006.

Our hedging activities may reduce the realized prices received for our oil and natural gas sales and require us to provide collateral for hedging liabilities.

In order to manage our exposure to price volatility in marketing our oil and gas, we enter into oil and gas price risk management arrangements for a portion of our expected production. Commodity price hedging may limit the prices we actually realize and therefore reduce oil and natural gas revenues in the future. The fair value of our oil and gas derivative instruments outstanding as of September 30, 2006 was an asset of approximately \$1.476 billion. In addition, our commodity price risk management transactions may expose us to the risk of financial loss in certain circumstances, including instances in which:

- our production is less than expected;
- there is a widening of price differentials between delivery points for our production and the delivery point assumed in the hedge arrangement; or
- the counterparties to our contracts fail to perform under the contracts.

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All but two of our commodity price risk management counterparties require us to provide assurances of performance in the event that the counterparties' mark-to-market exposure to us exceeds certain levels. Most of these arrangements allow us to minimize the potential liquidity impact of significant mark-to-market fluctuations by making collateral allocations from our revolving bank credit facility or directly pledging oil and gas properties, rather than posting cash or letters of credit with the counterparties. As of September 30, 2006, we had outstanding collateral allocations and pledges of oil and gas properties, with respect to commodity price risk management transactions but were not required to post any collateral with our counterparties through letters of credit issued under our revolving bank credit facility. As of November 22, 2006, we had outstanding transactions with thirteen counterparties, seven of which hold collateral allocations from our revolving bank credit facility or liens against certain oil and gas properties under our secured hedging facilities, and two of which do not require us to provide security for our risk management transactions. As of November 22, 2006, we were not required to post cash or letters of credit with the remaining four counterparties. Future collateral requirements are uncertain and will depend on the arrangements with our counterparties and highly volatile natural gas and oil prices.

Lower oil and gas prices could negatively impact our ability to borrow.

Our revolving bank credit facility limits our borrowings to the lesser of the borrowing base and the total commitments (currently both are \$2.5 billion). The borrowing base is determined periodically at the discretion of the banks and is based in part on oil and natural gas prices. Additionally, some of our indentures contain covenants limiting our ability to incur indebtedness in addition to that incurred under our revolving bank credit facility. These indentures limit our ability to incur additional indebtedness unless we meet one of two alternative tests. The first alternative is based on our adjusted consolidated net tangible assets (as defined in all of our indentures), which is determined using discounted future net revenues from proved oil and natural gas reserves as of the end of each year. The second alternative is based on the ratio of our adjusted consolidated EBITDA (as defined in the relevant indentures) to our adjusted consolidated interest expense over a trailing twelve-month period. As of the date of this prospectus, we are permitted to incur significant additional indebtedness under both of these debt incurrence tests. Lower oil and gas prices in the future could reduce our adjusted consolidated EBITDA, as well as our adjusted consolidated net tangible assets, and thus could reduce our ability to incur additional indebtedness.

Oil and natural gas drilling and producing operations can be hazardous and may expose us to environmental liabilities.

Oil and natural gas operations are subject to many risks, including well blowouts, cratering and explosions, pipe failure, fires, formations with abnormal pressures, uncontrollable flows of oil, natural gas, brine or well fluids, and other environmental hazards and risks. Our drilling operations involve risks from high pressures and from mechanical difficulties such as stuck pipes, collapsed casings and separated cables. If any of these risks occurs, we could sustain substantial losses as a result of:

- injury or loss of life;
- severe damage to or destruction of property, natural resources and equipment;
- pollution or other environmental damage;
- clean-up responsibilities;
- regulatory investigations and administrative, civil and criminal penalties; and

injunctions resulting in limitation or suspension of operations.

There is inherent risk of incurring significant environmental costs and liabilities in our exploration and production operations due to our generation, handling, and disposal of materials including wastes and petroleum hydrocarbons. We may incur joint and several, strict liability under applicable U.S. federal and state environmental laws in connection with releases of petroleum hydrocarbons and wastes on, under or from our leased or owned properties, some of which have been used for oil and natural gas exploration and production activities for a number of years, oftentimes by third parties not under our control. While we may maintain insurance against some, but not all, of the risks described above, our insurance may not be adequate to cover casualty losses or liabilities. Also, in the future we may not be able to obtain insurance at premium levels that justify its purchase.

In addition, in response to studies suggesting that emissions of certain gases may be contributing to warming of the Earth's atmosphere, many states are beginning to consider initiatives to track and record these gases, generally referred to as greenhouse gases, with several states having already adopted regulatory initiatives and one state, California, having adopted legislation aimed at reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. Methane, a primary component of natural gas, and carbon dioxide a byproduct of the burning of natural gas, are included among the types of gases targeted by greenhouse gas initiatives and laws. This movement is in its infancy but regulatory initiatives or legislation placing restrictions on emissions of methane or carbon dioxide that may be imposed in various states of the United States could adversely affect our operations and the demand for our products.

Other Developments

In the past year, there has been significant focus on corporate governance and accounting practices in the grant of equity based awards to executives and employees of publicly traded companies, including the use of market hindsight to select award dates to favor award recipients. Like many other public companies, we have in recent months received occasional investor inquiries regarding our practices in granting employee and executive stock options in past years. On our own initiative and under the auspices of our audit committee, we undertook an internal review of our practices in this area, primarily for the purpose of confirming that the past accounting treatment of our equity compensation awards was appropriate. Recently, we received an investor inquiry questioning the timing of several option grants during the period from 1995 to 2003 in relation to the trading price of our common stock. We expanded our internal review to review these specific option grants and the results were reported to our audit committee. While these internal reviews revealed deficiencies in the documentation of our option grants in prior years, there was no evidence of any misconduct by our executives or directors in the timing or selection of our option grant dates, or that would cause us to conclude that our prior accounting for stock option grants was incorrect in any material respect.

SIGNATURE

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

CHESAPEAKE ENERGY CORPORATION

By: /s/ AUBREY K. McCLENDON
Aubrey K. McClendon

Chairman of the Board and

Chief Executive Officer

Date: November 28, 2006