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BEAR STEARNS COMPANIES INC

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Form 424B3

March 01, 2004

PRICING SUPPLEMENT NO. 18 Rule 424(b)(3) DATED: February 19, 2004 File No. 333-109793 (To Prospectus dated November 17, 2003, and Prospectus Supplement dated November 17, 2003) \$10,668,950,162 THE BEAR STEARNS COMPANIES INC. Medium-Term Notes, Series B Principal Amount: \$10,000,000 Floating Rate Notes [x] Book Entry Notes [x] Original Issue Date: 3/1/2004 Fixed Rate Notes [] Certificated Notes [] Maturity Date: 3/1/2007 CUSIP#: 073928E58 Option to Extend Maturity: No [x] Yes [] Final Maturity Date: Optional Optional Repayment
Date(s) Redemption
Price(s) Repayment Redeemable On Price(s) Price(s) N/A N/A N/A N/A Applicable Only to Fixed Rate Notes: Interest Rate: Interest Payment Dates: Applicable Only to Floating Rate Notes: _____ Interest Rate Basis: Maximum Interest Rate: N/A [] Commercial Paper Rate Minimum Interest Rate: N/A [] Federal Funds Effective Rate [] Federal Funds Open Rate Interest Reset Date(s): * [] Treasury Rate Interest Reset Period: Monthly [] LIBOR Reuters Interest Payment Date(s): ** [x] LIBOR Telerate [] Prime Rate [] CMT Rate Initial Interest Rate: 1.26% Interest Payment Period: Monthly Index Maturity: One Month

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- * On the 1st of each month prior to Maturity.
- ** On the 1st of each month, including the maturity date.

The distribution of Notes will conform to the requirements set forth in Rule 2720 of the NASD Conduct Rules.