

DELTA AIR LINES INC /DE/

Form S-3

March 28, 2005

Table of Contents

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 28, 2005

Registration No. 333-

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

**FORM S-3
REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933**

Delta Air Lines, Inc.

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Its Charter)

Delaware

(State or Other Jurisdiction of
Incorporation or Organization)

58-0218548

(I.R.S. Employer
Identification Number)

**Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta
International Airport
Atlanta, Georgia 30320
(404) 715-2600**

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

**Gregory L. Riggs, Esq.
Senior Vice President - General Counsel
and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer
Delta Airlines, Inc.
P.O. Box 20706
Atlanta, Georgia 30320-6001
(404) 715-2611**

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

Copy to:
**Richard D. Truesdell, Jr., Esq.
Davis Polk & Wardwell
450 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10017**

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

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Shares to be Registered	Amount to be Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit (1)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price (1)(2)(3)	Amount of Registration Fee (4)
Debt Securities				
Warrants				
Preferred Stock	\$ 500,000,000	100%	\$ 500,000,000	\$ 58,850
Common Stock (including purchase rights)				
Purchase Contracts				
Units				

- (1) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee.
- (2) Such indeterminate amount of Debt Securities or such indeterminate number of Warrants, shares of Preferred Stock, shares of Common Stock, Rights, Purchase Contracts or Units as may from time to time be issued at indeterminate prices.
- (3) If any Debt Securities are issued at original issue discount, such greater amount as shall result in an aggregate initial offering price not in excess of \$500,000,000.
- (4) Pursuant to Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act of 1933, the registration fee is calculated on the maximum offering price of all securities listed, and the table does not specify information by each class about the amount to be registered. A filing fee of \$636,595.25 was previously paid in connection with \$2,546,381,000 of securities, \$172,250,000 of which were not sold, registered under a registration statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-65218) initially filed by the Registrant on July 16, 2001. Accordingly, pursuant to Rule 457(p) under the Securities Act of 1933, the Registrant offset \$43,130 of the previously paid filing fees against the total filing fee of \$58,850 due in connection with the filing of this Registration Statement. As a result, a filing fee of \$15,720 is required for the filing of this Registration Statement.

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 Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

Table of Contents

The information in this 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 prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and we are not soliciting offers to buy these securities in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED _____, 2005

PROSPECTUS

\$500,000,000

**COMMON STOCK
PREFERRED STOCK
DEBT SECURITIES
RIGHTS
WARRANTS
PURCHASE CONTRACTS
UNITS**

We may offer from time to time common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, rights, warrants, purchase contracts or units. Specific terms of these securities will be provided in supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and any supplement carefully before you invest.

Investing in these securities involves certain risks. See Risk Factors beginning on page 3.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved 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 _____, 2005

You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. We are not making an offer of these securities in any state where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of this prospectus. The terms Delta , the company , we, us, and our refer to Delta Air Lines, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	ii
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	ii
<u>Summary</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	3
<u>Business</u>	11

<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	11
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	11
<u>Description of Offered Preferred Stock</u>	16
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	17
<u>Description of Rights</u>	23
<u>Description of Warrants</u>	23
<u>Description of Purchase Contracts</u>	24
<u>Description of Units</u>	24
<u>Forms of Securities</u>	25
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	26
<u>Validity of Securities</u>	28
<u>Experts</u>	28
<u>EX-23.1 CONSENT OF DELOITTE & TOUCHE LLP.</u>	

Table of Contents

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and special reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document filed by us at the SEC's public reference rooms at 450 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference rooms. Delta's SEC filings are also available to the public over the internet at <http://www.sec.gov> and at Delta's website, www.delta.com. The contents of our website are not incorporated into this prospectus.

We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any filings made with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act after the date of this prospectus and prior to the termination of this offering (other than current reports furnished on Form 8-K under Items 2.02 and 7.01).

Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2004, as amended; and

Current Report on Form 8-K/A filed on January 20, 2005 and Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 27, 2005, March 4, 2005 and March 23, 2005.

The information incorporated by reference in this prospectus is considered to be a part of this prospectus, and information that we file later with the SEC, prior to the termination of this offering, will automatically update and supersede this information.

Any party to whom this prospectus is delivered may request a copy of these filings (other than any exhibits unless specifically incorporated by reference into this prospectus), at no cost, by writing or telephoning Delta at Delta Air Lines, Inc., Investor Relations, Dept. No. 829, P.O. Box 20706, Atlanta, GA 30320, telephone no. (404) 715-2600.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act), and Section 21E of the Exchange Act, which represent our expectations or beliefs concerning future events. When used in this prospectus, the words expects, plans, anticipates, and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. All forward-looking statements in this prospectus are based upon information available to us on the date of this prospectus. We undertake no obligation to update publicly or revise any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from historical experience or our expectations. For examples of such risks and uncertainties, please see Risk Factors in this prospectus. Additional information concerning these and other factors is contained in our SEC filings, including but not limited to our Forms 10-K, 10-Q and 8-K.

Table of Contents

SUMMARY

This summary may not contain all the information that may be important to you. You should read the entire prospectus, including the financial data and related notes and other information incorporated by reference, before making an investment decision.

Delta

We are a major air carrier that provides scheduled air transportation for passengers and cargo throughout the United States and around the world. Based on calendar year 2004 data, we are the second-largest carrier in terms of passengers carried and the third-largest airline as measured by operating revenues and revenue passenger miles flown. We are a leading U.S. transatlantic airline, serving the largest number of nonstop markets and offering the most daily flight departures. Among U.S. airlines, we have the second-most transatlantic passengers. We operate hubs in Atlanta, Cincinnati and Salt Lake City. We also operate international gateways in Atlanta and at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Our principal executive offices are located at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Atlanta, Georgia 30320-6001 and our telephone number is (404) 715-2600.

About this Prospectus

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the SEC utilizing a shelf registration process. Under this shelf process, we may sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings up to a total dollar amount of \$500,000,000. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. 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 described under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**.

Risk Factors

You should carefully consider all of the information in this prospectus and, in particular, you should evaluate the specific risk factors set forth under the heading **Risk Factors**, beginning on page 3.

Table of Contents

**Ratios of Earnings (Loss) to Fixed Charges
and of Earnings (Loss) to Combined
Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends**

The following table sets forth our consolidated ratios of earnings to fixed charges and of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends for the periods indicated. The data presented in this table are derived from and should be read in conjunction with our audited financial statements incorporated by reference from our report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2004.

	Fiscal Year				
	2004¹	2003¹	2002¹	2001¹	2000
Ratio of earnings (loss) to fixed charges					2.42
Ratio of earnings (loss) to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends					2.37

¹ Both (1) fixed charges and (2) combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends exceeded our adjusted earnings (loss) by \$4.0 billion, \$1.2 billion, \$2.0 billion and \$1.8 billion for the years ended December 31, 2004, 2003, 2002, and 2001, respectively.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

You should carefully consider each of the following risks and all of the other information set forth in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement before deciding to invest in our securities. Some of the following risks relate principally to our business in general and the industry in which we operate. Other risks relate principally to the securities markets and ownership of our securities.

Risks Factors Relating to Delta

If we are unsuccessful in further reducing our operating expenses and continue to experience significant losses, we will need to seek to restructure our costs under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

We reported a net loss of \$5.2 billion, \$773 million and \$1.3 billion for the years ended December 31, 2004, 2003 and 2002, respectively. We expect our revenue and cost challenges to continue. In addition, Deloitte & Touche LLP, our independent registered public accounting firm, issued a Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm related to our Consolidated Financial Statements that contains an explanatory paragraph that makes reference to uncertainty about our ability to continue as a going concern. Future reports may continue to contain this explanatory paragraph.

In connection with our restructuring efforts in the December 2004 quarter, we determined that there are anticipated annual benefits from our transformation plan sufficient for us to achieve financial viability by way of an out-of-court restructuring, including reduction of pilot costs of at least \$1 billion annually by the end of 2006 and other benefits of at least \$1.7 billion annually by the end of 2006 (in addition to the approximately \$2.3 billion of annual benefits (compared to 2002) achieved by the end of 2004 through previously implemented profit improvement initiatives). This determination, however, was based on a number of material assumptions, including, without limitation, assumptions about fuel prices, yields, competition and our access to additional sources of financing on acceptable terms. Any number of these assumptions, many of which, such as fuel prices, are not within our control, could prove to be incorrect.

Even if we achieve all of the approximately \$5 billion in targeted annual benefits from our transformation plan, we may need even greater cost savings because our industry has been subject to progressively increasing competitive pressure. We cannot assure you that these anticipated benefits will be achieved or that if they are achieved that they will be adequate for us to maintain financial viability.

In addition, our transformation plan involves significant changes to our business. We cannot assure you that we will be successful in implementing the plan or that key elements, such as employee job reductions, will not have an adverse impact on our business and results of operations, particularly in the near term. Although we have assumed that incremental revenues from our transformation plan will more than offset related costs, in light of the competitive pressures we face, we cannot assure you that we will be successful in realizing any of such incremental revenues.

If we are not successful in further reducing our operating expenses and continue to experience significant losses, we would need to seek to restructure our costs under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. A restructuring under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code may be particularly difficult because we pledged substantially all of our remaining unencumbered collateral in connection with transactions we completed in the December 2004 quarter as a part of our out-of-court restructuring.

We have substantial liquidity needs, and there is no assurance that we will be able to obtain the necessary financing to meet those needs on acceptable terms, if at all.

Even if we are successful in achieving all of the approximately \$5 billion in targeted benefits under our transformation plan, we do not expect to achieve the full \$5 billion until the end of 2006. As we transition to a lower cost structure, we continue to face significant challenges due to low passenger mile yields, historically high fuel prices and other cost pressures related to interest expense and pension and related expense. Accordingly, we believe

Table of Contents

that we will record a substantial net loss in 2005, and that our cash flows from operations will not be sufficient to meet all of our liquidity needs for that period.

We currently expect to meet our liquidity needs for 2005 from cash flows from operations, our available cash and cash equivalents and short-term investments, commitments from a third party to finance on a long-term secured basis our purchase of 32 regional jet aircraft to be delivered to us in 2005, and the final \$250 million borrowing under our financing agreement with American Express Travel Related Services Company, Inc. (Amex), which occurred on March 1, 2005. Because substantially all of our assets are encumbered and our credit ratings have been substantially lowered, we do not expect to be able to obtain any material amount of additional debt financing. Unless we are able to sell assets or access the capital markets by issuing equity or convertible debt securities, we expect that our cash and cash equivalents and short-term investments will be substantially lower at December 31, 2005 than at the end of 2004.

Our liquidity needs will be substantially higher than we expect if:

Oil prices do not decline significantly. Crude oil is a component of jet fuel. Crude oil prices are volatile and may increase or decrease significantly. Our business plan assumes that the average jet fuel price per gallon in 2005 will be approximately \$1.22 (with each 1¢ increase in the average annual jet fuel price per gallon increasing our liquidity needs by approximately \$25 million per year, unless we are successful in offsetting some or all of this increase through fare increases or additional cost reduction initiatives). The forward curve for crude oil currently implies substantially higher jet fuel prices for 2005 than our business plan. We have no hedges or contractual arrangements that would reduce our jet fuel costs below market prices.

The other assumptions underlying our business plan prove to be incorrect in any material adverse respect. Many of these assumptions, such as yields, competition, pension funding obligations and our access to financing, are not within our control.

We are unsuccessful in achieving any of the approximately \$5 billion of targeted benefits (compared to 2002) of our transformation plan. Many of the benefits of our transformation plan, such as incremental revenues, are not within our control.

Our Visa/MasterCard processor requires a significant holdback. Our current Visa/MasterCard processing contract expires in August 2005. If our renewal or replacement contract requires a significant holdback, it will increase our liquidity needs.

If the assumptions underlying our business plan prove to be incorrect in any material adverse respect and we are unable to sell assets or access the capital markets, or if our level of cash and cash equivalents and short-term investments otherwise declines to an unacceptably low level, then we would need to seek to restructure under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

Our financing agreements with GE Commercial Finance and Amex include financial covenants that impose substantial restrictions on our financial and business operations and include financial tests that we must meet in order to continue to borrow under such facilities.

The terms of our financing agreements with GE Commercial Finance and Amex restrict our ability to, among other things, incur additional indebtedness, pay dividends or make other payments on investments, consummate asset sales or similar transactions, create liens, merge or consolidate with any other person, or sell, assign, transfer, lease, convey or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of our assets. The terms also contain covenants that require us to meet financial tests in order to continue to borrow under the facility and to avoid a default that might lead to an early termination of the facility. If we were not able to comply with these covenants, our outstanding obligations under these facilities could be accelerated and become due and payable immediately. The terms of the credit facilities,

including these covenants, are generally described in Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Financial Condition and Liquidity Covenants in Item 7 of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2004.

Table of Contents

Our indebtedness and other obligations are substantial and materially adversely affect our business and our ability to incur additional debt to fund future needs.

We have now and will continue to have a significant amount of indebtedness and other obligations, as well as substantial pension funding obligations. As of December 31, 2004, we had approximately \$13.9 billion of total consolidated indebtedness, including capital leases. We also have minimum rental commitments with a present value of approximately \$6.4 billion under noncancelable operating leases with initial terms in excess of one year. On December 1, 2004, we received an aggregate of \$830 million in financing pursuant to separate financing agreements with GE Commercial Finance and Amex. Except for commitments to finance our purchases of regional jet aircraft and the additional \$250 million prepayment that we received from Amex on March 1, 2005, we have no available lines of credit. Additionally, we believe that our access to additional financing on acceptable terms is limited, at least in the near term. If we cannot achieve a competitive cost structure and regain sustained profitability, we would need to seek to restructure our costs under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. A restructuring under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code may be particularly difficult because we pledged substantially all of our unencumbered collateral in connection with our out-of-court restructuring in the December 2004 quarter.

Our substantial indebtedness and other obligations have, and in the future could continue to, negatively impact our operations by:

requiring us to dedicate a substantial portion of our cash flow from operations to the payment of principal of, and interest on, our indebtedness, thereby reducing the funds available to us for other purposes;

making us more vulnerable to economic downturns, adverse industry conditions or catastrophic external events, limiting our ability to withstand competitive pressures and reducing our flexibility in planning for, or responding to, changing business and economic conditions; and

placing us at a competitive disadvantage to our competitors that have relatively less debt than we have.

Our pension plan funding obligations are significant and are affected by factors beyond our control.

We sponsor qualified defined benefit pension plans for eligible employees and retirees. Our funding obligations under these plans are governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). We met our required funding obligations for these plans under ERISA in 2004.

Estimates of the amount and timing of our future funding obligations for the pension plans are based on various assumptions. These include assumptions concerning, among other things, the actual and projected market performance of the pension plan assets; future long-term corporate bond yields; statutory requirements; and demographic data for pension plan participants. The amount and timing of our future funding obligations also depends on the level of early retirements by pilots.

We estimate that our funding obligations under our defined benefit and defined contribution pension plans for 2005 will be approximately \$450 million. This estimate may vary depending on, among other things, the assumptions used to determine the amount. This estimate reflects the projected impact of the election we made in 2004 to utilize the alternative deficit reduction contribution relief provided by the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2004. That legislation permits us to defer payment of a portion of the otherwise required funding. Our anticipated funding obligations under our pension plans for 2006 and thereafter vary materially depending on the assumptions used to determine these funding obligations, including potential legislative changes regarding pension funding obligations. Absent the enactment of new federal legislation that reduces our pension funding obligations during the next several years, our annual pension funding obligations for each of the years 2006 through 2009 will be significantly higher than in 2005, and could have a material adverse impact on our liquidity.

If our pilots retire prior to their normal retirement at age 60 at greater than historical levels, this could disrupt our operations, negatively impact our revenue and increase our pension funding obligations.

Under the Delta Pilots Retirement Plan (Pilots Retirement Plan), Delta pilots who retire can elect to receive 50% of their accrued pension benefit in a lump sum in connection with their retirement and the remaining 50% as an

Table of Contents

annuity after retirement. During certain recent months, our pilots have taken early retirement at greater than historical levels apparently due to (1) a perceived risk of rising interest rates, which could reduce the amount of their lump sum pension benefit; and/or (2) concerns about their ability to receive a lump sum pension benefit if (a) we were to seek to restructure our costs under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (b) a notice of intent to terminate the Pilots Retirement Plan is issued. If early retirements by pilots occur at greater than historical levels in the future, this could, depending on the number of pilots who retire early, the aircraft types these pilots operate and other factors, disrupt our operations, negatively impact our revenues and increase our pension funding obligations significantly. Approximately 1,800 of our 6,400 pilots are currently at or over age 50 and thus are eligible to retire.

Our business is dependent on the price and availability of aircraft fuel. Continued periods of historically high fuel costs or significant disruptions in the supply of aircraft fuel will materially adversely affect our operating results.

Our operating results are significantly impacted by changes in the availability or price of aircraft fuel. Fuel prices increased substantially in 2004, when our average fuel price per gallon rose 42% to approximately \$1.16 as compared to an average price of 81.78¢ in 2003. Our fuel costs represented 16%, 13% and 11% of our operating expenses in 2004, 2003 and 2002, respectively. Due to the competitive nature of the airline industry, we generally have not been able to increase our fares when fuel prices have risen in the past and we may not be able to do so in the future.

Our aircraft fuel purchase contracts do not provide material protection against price increases or assure the availability of our fuel supplies. We purchase most of our aircraft fuel from petroleum refiners under contracts that establish the price based on various market indices. We also purchase aircraft fuel on the spot market, from offshore sources and under contracts that permit the refiners to set the price. None of our aircraft fuel requirements are currently hedged.

Although we are currently able to obtain adequate supplies of aircraft fuel, it is impossible to predict the future availability or price of aircraft fuel. Political disruptions or wars involving oil-producing countries, changes in government policy concerning aircraft fuel production, transportation or marketing, changes in aircraft fuel production capacity, environmental concerns and other unpredictable events may result in fuel supply shortages and additional fuel price increases in the future.

Our credit ratings have been substantially lowered and, unless we achieve significant reductions in our cost structure, we will be unable to access the capital markets for new borrowings on acceptable terms, which could hinder our ability to operate our business.

Our business is highly dependent on our ability to access the capital markets. Since September 11, 2001, our senior unsecured long-term debt ratings have been lowered to Ca by Moody's Investors Service, Inc., CC by Standard & Poor's Rating Services and C by Fitch Ratings. Moody's and Fitch have stated that their ratings outlook for our senior unsecured debt is negative while we are on positive watch with Standard & Poor's. Our credit ratings may be lowered further or withdrawn. We do not have debt obligations that accelerate as a result of a credit ratings downgrade. We believe that our access to the capital markets for new borrowings is limited, at least in the near term.

Interruptions or disruptions in service at one of our hub airports could have a material adverse impact on our operations.

Our business is heavily dependent on our operations at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and at our other hub airports in Cincinnati and Salt Lake City. Each of these hub operations includes flights that gather and distribute traffic from markets in the geographic region surrounding the hub to other major cities and to other Delta hubs. A significant interruption or disruption in service at the Atlanta Airport or at one of our other hubs could have a

serious impact on our business, financial condition and operating results.

Table of Contents

We are increasingly dependent on technology in our operations, and if our technology fails or we are unable to continue to invest in new technology, our business may be adversely affected.

We are increasingly dependent on technology initiatives to reduce costs and to enhance customer service in order to compete in the current business environment. For example, we have made significant investments in check-in kiosks, Delta Direct phone banks and related initiatives across the system. The performance and reliability of our technology are critical to our ability to attract and retain customers and our ability to compete effectively. In this challenging business environment, we may not be able to continue to make sufficient capital investments in our technology infrastructure to deliver these expected benefits.

In addition, any internal technology error or failure, or large scale external interruption in technology infrastructure we depend on, such as power, telecommunications or the internet, may disrupt our technology network. Any individual, sustained or repeated failure of our technology could impact our customer service and result in increased costs. Like all companies, our technology systems may be vulnerable to a variety of sources of interruption due to events beyond our control, including natural disasters, terrorist attacks, telecommunications failures, computer viruses, hackers and other security issues. While we have in place, and continue to invest in, technology security initiatives and disaster recovery plans, these measures may not be adequate or implemented properly to prevent a business disruption and its adverse financial consequences to our business.

If we experience further losses of our senior management and other key employees, our operating results could be adversely affected, and we may not be able to attract and retain additional qualified management personnel.

We are dependent on the experience and industry knowledge of our officers and other key employees to execute our business plans. Our deteriorating financial performance creates uncertainty that has led and may continue to lead to departures of our officers and key employees. If we were to continue to experience a substantial turnover in our leadership, our performance could be materially adversely impacted. Additionally, we may be unable to attract and retain additional qualified executives as needed in the future.

Employee strikes and other labor-related disruptions may adversely affect our operations.

Our business is labor intensive, requiring large numbers of pilots, flight attendants, mechanics and other personnel. Approximately 18% of our workforce is unionized. Strikes or labor disputes with our and our affiliates' unionized employees may adversely affect our ability to conduct our business. Relations between air carriers and labor unions in the United States are governed by the Railway Labor Act, which provides that a collective bargaining agreement between an airline and a labor union does not expire, but instead becomes amendable as of a stated date. Our collective bargaining agreement with the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), which represents our pilots, becomes amendable on December 31, 2009.

Our wholly-owned subsidiary, Atlantic Southeast Airlines, Inc. (ASA) is in collective bargaining negotiations with ALPA, which represents ASA's pilots, and with the Association of Flight Attendants, which represents ASA's flight attendants, to amend their existing collective bargaining agreements that became amendable in September 2002 and September 2003, respectively. Our wholly-owned subsidiary, Comair, Inc. (Comair) is also in collective bargaining negotiations with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which represents Comair's maintenance employees. The maintenance employees rejected a tentative agreement to amend their existing agreement that became amendable in May 2004, which Comair had reached with the union's negotiating committee, but Comair expects negotiations to continue. In addition, Comair is negotiating with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which represents Comair's flight attendants, to modify their existing collective bargaining agreement, which becomes amendable in July 2007. The outcome of ASA and Comair's collective bargaining negotiations cannot presently be determined. In addition to the ASA and Comair negotiations, if we or our affiliates are unable to reach agreement with

any of our unionized work groups on future negotiations regarding the terms of their collective bargaining agreements, or if additional segments of our workforce become unionized, we may be subject to work interruptions or stoppages.

Table of Contents

We are facing significant litigation, including litigation arising from the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and if any such significant litigation is concluded in a manner adverse to us, our financial condition and operating results could be materially adversely affected.

We are involved in legal proceedings relating to antitrust matters, employment practices, environmental issues and other matters concerning our business. We are also a defendant in numerous lawsuits arising out of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It appears that the plaintiffs in these September 11 actions are alleging that we and many other air carriers are jointly liable for damages resulting from the terrorist attacks based on a theory of shared responsibility for passenger security screening at Boston-Logan International Airport, Washington Dulles International Airport and Newark Liberty International Airport. These lawsuits, which are in preliminary stages, generally seek unspecified damages, including punitive damages. Although federal law limits the financial liability of any air carrier for compensatory and punitive damages arising out of the September 11 terrorist attacks to no more than the limits of liability insurance coverage maintained by the air carrier, it is possible that we may be required to pay damages in the event of our insurer's insolvency or otherwise.

While we cannot reasonably estimate the potential loss for certain of our legal proceedings because, for example, the litigation is in its early stages or the plaintiff does not specify damages being sought, if the outcome of any significant litigation is adverse to us, our financial condition and operating results could be materially adversely impacted.

We are at risk of losses and adverse publicity stemming from any accident involving our aircraft.

If one of our aircraft were to crash or be involved in an accident, we could be exposed to significant tort liability. The insurance we carry to cover damages arising from any future accidents may be inadequate. In the event that our insurance is not adequate, we may be forced to bear substantial losses from an accident. In addition, any accident involving an aircraft that we operate or is operated by an airline that is one of our codeshare partners could create a public perception that our aircraft are not safe or reliable, which could harm our reputation, result in air travelers being reluctant to fly on our aircraft and harm our business.

Issuances of equity in connection with our restructuring increase the likelihood that in the future our ability to utilize our federal income tax net operating loss carryforwards may be limited.

Under federal income tax law, a corporation is generally permitted to deduct from taxable income in any year net operating losses carried forward from prior years. We have net operating loss carryforwards of approximately \$7.5 billion as of December 31, 2004. Our ability to deduct net operating loss carryforwards could be subject to a significant limitation if we were to seek to restructure our costs under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and undergo an ownership change for purposes of Section 382 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (an Ownership Change). Even outside of a Chapter 11 restructuring, there can be no assurances that future actions by us or third party will not trigger an Ownership Change resulting in a limitation on our ability to deduct net operating loss carryforwards.

Risks Factors Relating to the Airline Industry

Bankruptcies and other restructuring efforts by our competitors have put us at a competitive disadvantage.

Since September 11, 2001, several air carriers have sought to reorganize under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, including United Airlines, the second-largest U.S. air carrier, US Airways, the seventh largest U.S. air carrier, ATA Airlines, the tenth-largest U.S. air carrier, and several smaller competitors. Since filing for Chapter 11 on August 11, 2002, US Airways emerged from bankruptcy, but announced on September 12, 2004 that it is again

seeking to reorganize under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. In their respective proceedings, United and US Airways have reduced or are seeking to reduce their operating costs by reducing labor costs, including through renegotiating collective bargaining agreements, terminating pension plans, and restructuring lease and debt obligations. Additionally, American Airlines restructured certain labor costs and lowered its operating cost base. These reorganizations and restructurings have enabled these competitors to significantly lower their operating costs. Our unit costs went from being among the lowest of the hub-and-spoke carriers in 2002 to among the highest in 2004, a result that placed us at a serious competitive disadvantage. While we believe that the \$5 billion in targeted

Table of Contents

annual benefits (compared to 2002) from our transformation plan, including \$1 billion in long-term annual cost savings achieved through the new collective bargaining agreement with our pilots, will contribute to a reduction of our unit costs, our cost structure will still be higher than that of low-cost carriers.

The airline industry has changed fundamentally since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and our business, financial condition and operating results have been materially adversely affected.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the airline industry has experienced fundamental and permanent changes, including substantial revenue declines and cost increases, which have resulted in industry-wide liquidity issues. The terrorist attacks significantly reduced the demand for air travel, and additional terrorist activity involving the airline industry could have an equal or greater impact. Although global economic conditions have improved from their depressed levels after September 11, 2001, the airline industry has continued to experience a reduction in high-yield business travel and increased price sensitivity in customers' purchasing behavior. In addition, aircraft fuel prices have recently been at historically high levels. The airline industry has continued to add or restore capacity despite these conditions. We expect all of these conditions will continue and may adversely impact our operations and profitability.

The airline industry is highly competitive, and if we cannot successfully compete in the marketplace, our business, financial condition and operating results will be materially adversely affected.

We face significant competition with respect to routes, services and fares. Our domestic routes are subject to competition from both new and established carriers, some of which have substantially lower costs than we do and provide service at low fares to destinations served by us. Our revenues continue to be materially adversely impacted by the growth of low-cost carriers, with which we compete in most of our markets. Significant expansion by low-cost carriers to our hub airports could have an adverse impact on our business. We also face increasing competition in smaller to medium-sized markets from rapidly expanding regional jet operators. In addition, we compete with foreign carriers, both on interior U.S. routes, due to marketing and codesharing arrangements, and in international markets.

The airline industry is subject to extensive government regulation, and new regulations may increase our operating costs.

Airlines are subject to extensive regulatory and legal compliance requirements that result in significant costs. For instance, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) from time to time issues directives and other regulations relating to the maintenance and operation of aircraft that necessitate significant expenditures. We expect to continue incurring expenses to comply with the FAA's regulations.

Other laws, regulations, taxes and airport rates and charges have also been imposed from time to time that significantly increase the cost of airline operations or reduce revenues. For example, the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, which became law in November 2001, mandates the federalization of certain airport security procedures and imposes additional security requirements on airports and airlines, most of which are funded by a per ticket tax on passengers and a tax on airlines. The federal government has recently proposed a significant increase in the per ticket tax. Due to the weak revenue environment, the existing tax has negatively impacted our revenues because we have not been able to increase our fares to pass these fees on to our customers. Similarly, the proposed ticket tax increase, if implemented, could negatively impact our revenues.

Furthermore, we and other U.S. carriers are subject to domestic and foreign laws regarding privacy of passenger and employee data that are not consistent in all countries in which we operate. In addition to the heightened level of concern regarding privacy of passenger data in the United States, certain European government agencies are initiating inquiries into airline privacy practices. Compliance with these regulatory regimes is expected to result in additional

operating costs and could impact our operations and any future expansion.

Table of Contents

Our insurance costs have increased substantially as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks, and further increases in insurance costs or reductions in coverage could have a material adverse impact on our business and operating results.

As a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, aviation insurers significantly reduced the maximum amount of insurance coverage available to commercial air carriers for liability to persons (other than employees or passengers) for claims resulting from acts of terrorism, war or similar events. At the same time, aviation insurers significantly increased the premiums for such coverage and for aviation insurance in general. Since September 24, 2001, the U.S. government has been providing U.S. airlines with war-risk insurance to cover losses, including those resulting from terrorism, to passengers, third parties (ground damage) and the aircraft hull. The coverage currently extends through August 31, 2005 (with a possible extension to December 31, 2005 at the discretion of the Secretary of Transportation). The withdrawal of government support of airline war-risk insurance would require us to obtain war-risk insurance coverage commercially. Such commercial insurance could have substantially less desirable coverage than currently provided by the U.S. government, may not be adequate to protect our risk of loss from future acts of terrorism, may result in a material increase to our operating expenses and may result in an interruption to our operations.

Table of Contents

BUSINESS

General Description

We are a major air carrier that provides scheduled air transportation for passengers and cargo throughout the United States and around the world. As of December 31, 2004, we (including our wholly-owned subsidiaries, ASA and Comair) served 176 domestic cities in 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as 51 cities in 33 countries. With our domestic and international codeshare partners, our route network covers 224 domestic cities in 49 states, and 223 cities in 89 countries. We are managed as a single business unit.

Based on calendar year 2004 data, we are the second-largest airline in terms of passengers carried, and the third-largest airline measured by operating revenues and revenue passenger miles flown. We are a leading U.S. transatlantic airline, serving the largest number of nonstop markets and offering the most daily flight departures. Among U.S. airlines, we have the second-most transatlantic passengers.

We are incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware. Our principal executive offices are located at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia (the Atlanta Airport). Our telephone number is (404) 715-2600, and our Internet address is www.delta.com. We are not incorporating the contents of our website into this prospectus.

See Risk Factors Risks Relating to Delta and Risk Factors Risks Relating to the Airline Industry for additional discussion of trends and factors affecting us and our industry.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise indicated in a prospectus supplement, the net proceeds from the sale of the securities will be used for general corporate purposes, primarily to fund our operations, to repay debt or for any other purpose we describe in any applicable prospectus supplement. Our management will retain broad discretion in the allocation and use of the net proceeds from the sale of these securities.

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

The following statements relating to our capital stock do not purport to be complete, and are subject to, and are qualified in their entirety by reference to, the provisions of the following documents, which are filed, or incorporated by reference, as exhibits to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2004: (a) the Certificate of Incorporation (the Certificate) and By-Laws (the By-Laws); (b) the Certificate of Designations, Preferences and Rights of the Series B ESOP Convertible Preferred Stock (the Series B Preferred Stock) and the Certificate of Designations, Preferences and Rights of the Series D Junior Participating Preferred Stock (the Series D Preferred Stock); and (c) the Rights Agreement, dated as of October 23, 1996, as amended (the Rights Agreement), between Delta and Wells Fargo Minnesota Bank, N.A., as successor Rights Agent to First Chicago Trust Company of New York as Rights Agent.

General

The Certificate authorizes a total of 470,000,000 shares of capital stock, of which 450,000,000 may be shares of common stock and 20,000,000 may be shares of preferred stock. The preferred stock may be issued from time to time in one or more series, without shareowner approval, with such voting powers (full or limited), designations,

preferences and relative, participating, optional or other special rights, and qualifications, limitations or restrictions as shall be adopted by the board of directors. Thus, without shareowner approval, Delta could authorize the issuance of preferred stock with voting, conversion and other rights that could dilute the voting power and other rights of the holders of common stock.

As of December 31, 2004, 139,830,443 shares of common stock were outstanding; 50,915,002 shares of common stock were held in treasury; 5,417,735 shares of Series B Preferred Stock were outstanding and 9,294,125

Table of Contents

shares of common stock were reserved for issuance upon the conversion of the Series B Preferred Stock; 2,250,000 shares of Series D Preferred Stock had been authorized and reserved for issuance in connection with the rights described below; 12,500,005 shares of common stock were reserved for issuance upon the conversion of 8.00% Convertible Senior Notes due 2023; 23,923,445 shares of common stock were reserved for issuance upon conversion of 27/8% Convertible Senior Notes due 2024; 85,604,064 shares of common stock were reserved for issuance under Delta's broad-based employee stock option plans; 15,811,677 shares of common stock were reserved for issuance under Delta's 2000 Performance Compensation Plan; 250,000 shares of common stock were reserved for issuance under Delta's Non-Employee Directors' Stock Option Plan; and 400,319 shares of common stock were reserved for issuance under Delta's Non-Employee Directors' Stock Plan.

Common Stock

Subject to the rights of the holders of any shares of preferred stock that may at the time be outstanding, record holders of common stock are entitled to such dividends as the board of directors may declare. Holders of common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held in their name on all matters submitted to a vote of shareowners and do not have preemptive rights or cumulative voting rights. Holders of the Series B Preferred Stock generally vote as a single class with the holders of common stock on matters upon which the common stock is entitled to vote and, subject to adjustment in certain circumstances, are entitled to two votes for each share of Series B Preferred Stock held in their name.

Holders of common stock are not subject to further calls or assessments as a result of their holding shares of common stock. In July 2003, our board of directors suspended indefinitely the payment of quarterly cash dividends on the common stock. We are currently prohibited from paying dividends on our capital stock due to restrictions under Delaware law. See "Series B Preferred Stock" below.

If Delta is liquidated, the holders of shares of common stock are entitled to share ratably in the distribution remaining after payment of debts and expenses and of the amounts to be paid on liquidation to the holders of shares of preferred stock.

Wells Fargo Minnesota Bank, N.A., is the registrar and transfer agent for the common stock.

Shareowner Rights Plan

The Shareowner Rights Plan is designed to protect shareowners against attempts to acquire Delta that do not offer an adequate purchase price to all shareowners, or are otherwise not in the best interest of Delta and our shareowners. Under the plan, each outstanding share of common stock is accompanied by one-half of a preferred stock purchase right. Each whole right entitles the holder to purchase 1/100 of a share of Series D Preferred Stock at an exercise price of \$300, subject to adjustment.

The rights become exercisable only after a person acquires, or makes a tender or exchange offer that would result in the person acquiring, beneficial ownership of 15% or more of our common stock. If a person acquires beneficial ownership of 15% or more of our common stock, each right will entitle its holder (other than the acquiring person) to exercise his rights to purchase our common stock having a market value of twice the exercise price.

If a person acquires beneficial ownership of 15% or more of our common stock and (1) we are involved in a merger or other business combination in which Delta is not the surviving corporation or (2) we sell more than 50% of our assets or earning power, then each right will entitle its holder (other than the acquiring person) to exercise his rights to purchase common stock of the acquiring company having a market value of twice the exercise price.

The rights expire on November 4, 2006. Delta may redeem the rights for \$0.01 per right at any time before a person becomes the beneficial owner of 15% or more of our common stock. Delta may also amend the rights in any respect so long as the rights are redeemable. At December 31, 2004, 2,250,000 shares of preferred stock were reserved for issuance under the Shareowner Rights Plan.

The rights have certain anti-takeover effects. The rights could cause substantial dilution to a person or group that attempts to acquire Delta without conditioning the offer on redemption of the rights or on acquisition of

Table of Contents

substantially all of the rights. The rights should not, however, interfere with any merger or other business combination approved by the board of directors.

Certain Other Provisions of the Certificate

Delaware law permits a corporation to eliminate the personal liability of its directors to the corporation or to any of its shareowners for monetary damages for a breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except (i) for breach of the director's duty of loyalty, (ii) for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (iii) for certain unlawful dividends and stock repurchases or (iv) for any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit. The Certificate provides for such limitation of liability.

As permitted by Delaware law, the Certificate permits stockholder action by written consent only if such consent is unanimous. The affirmative vote of the holders of at least 75% of Delta's then outstanding voting stock is required to amend, alter or repeal this provision.

The Certificate also provides that any Business Combination involving Delta and a person (other than Delta or any subsidiary or employee benefit plan of Delta) who beneficially owns 10% or more of Delta's voting stock (a Related Person) must be approved by (i) the holders of at least 75% of the votes entitled to be cast by the holders of Delta's capital stock entitled to vote generally on the election of directors and (ii) a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the holders of such voting stock, excluding stock beneficially owned by such Related Person (the Voting Requirement). The Voting Requirement does not apply if the Business Combination is approved by a majority of Continuing Directors (as defined), or complies with certain minimum price, form of consideration and other requirements. The Certificate defines Business Combination to include, among other things, (i) any merger or consolidation of Delta with, into or for the benefit of a Related Person; (ii) the sale by Delta of assets or securities to a Related Person, or any other arrangement with or for the benefit of a Related Person, which involves assets or securities valued at an amount equal to at least \$15 million; (iii) the acquisition by Delta of assets or securities of a Related Person valued at an amount equal to at least \$15 million; or (iv) the adoption of any plan for the liquidation or dissolution of Delta. Some of the Business Combinations to which the Voting Requirement would apply would not normally require stockholder approval under Delaware law. This provision of the Certificate cannot be amended, altered or repealed except by a vote similar to the Voting Requirement.

Series B Preferred Stock

General

On July 10, 1989, Delta amended its Savings Plan, effective July 1, 1989, to add an employee stock ownership plan feature (the ESOP). In connection with the establishment of the ESOP, Delta sold 6,944,450 shares of Series B Preferred Stock to the trustee of the ESOP for \$72 per share, or approximately \$500 million.

In order to finance the purchase of the Series B Preferred Stock, the ESOP issued \$481,400,400 principal amount of Guaranteed Serial ESOP Notes (the Guaranteed Serial ESOP Notes). The Guaranteed Serial ESOP Notes are guaranteed by Delta.

Delta is obligated to make payments to the ESOP in order for the ESOP to make payments due under the Guaranteed Serial ESOP Notes and to fund investment elections of participants. As payments on the Guaranteed Serial ESOP Notes are made, shares of Series B Preferred Stock are credited to the participants' accounts. All shares of Series B Preferred Stock not so credited are treated as unallocated under the Savings Plan.

The shares of Series B Preferred Stock will be held in the name of the trustee (or its nominee) until redemption or conversion, and may not be sold by the trustee or distributed outside the Savings Plan except for resale to Delta. In the event of any transfer of shares of Series B Preferred Stock to any person other than the trustee, the shares so transferred, upon such transfer, shall be automatically converted into shares of common stock.

Each share of Series B Preferred Stock has a stated value of \$72; bears an annual cumulative cash dividend of 6% or \$4.32; is convertible into 1.7155 shares of common stock (a conversion price of \$41.97), subject to adjustment in certain circumstances; has a liquidation preference of \$72, plus any accrued and unpaid dividends;

Table of Contents

generally votes together as a single class with the common stock on matters upon which the common stock is entitled to vote; and has two votes, subject to adjustment in certain circumstances. If full cumulative dividends on the Series B Preferred Stock have not been declared, paid or set apart for payment when due, Delta (i) may pay only ratable dividends (in proportion to the accumulated and unpaid dividends) on the Series B Preferred Stock and any series of stock ranking on a parity with the Series B Preferred Stock, as to dividends and (ii) subject to certain exceptions, may not pay dividends on, or make any payment on account of the purchase, redemption or other retirement of, the common stock or any other class or series of stock ranking junior to the Series B Preferred Stock.

Effective December 2003, our board of directors suspended indefinitely the payment of dividends on our Series B Preferred Stock to comply with Delaware law. Delaware law provides that a company may pay dividends only (1) out of surplus, which is generally defined as the excess of the company's net assets over the aggregate par value of its issued stock; or (2) from its net profits for the fiscal year in which the dividend is paid or the preceding fiscal year. At December 31, 2003, we had a negative surplus and did not meet the net profits test.

Also, effective December 2003, our board of directors changed the form of payment we will use to redeem shares of the Series B Preferred Stock when redemptions are required under the Savings Plan. For the indefinite future, we will pay the Alternative Redemption Price (as defined below), plus accrued and unpaid dividends, in shares of our common stock rather than in cash. The Board took this action to comply with Delaware law, which generally provides that a company may not purchase or redeem shares of its capital stock for cash or other property unless it has sufficient surplus. During 2004, we issued 6,330,551 shares of our common stock to redeem approximately 422,000 shares of Series B Preferred Stock under the Savings Plan. We cannot reasonably estimate future issuance of common stock for this purpose due to the various factors that would affect such an estimate, including the duration of the period during which we may not redeem Series B Preferred Stock for cash under Delaware law; the fair value of Delta common stock when Series B Preferred is redeemed; and the number of shares of Series B Preferred Stock redeemed by Savings Plan participants who terminate their employment with us or elect to diversify their Savings Plan accounts.

As of December 31, 2004, there were issued and outstanding 5,417,735 shares of Series B Preferred Stock.

Mandatory Redemption

Delta is required to redeem shares of Series B Preferred Stock, at any time, at a redemption price (the Alternative Redemption Price) equal to the greater of (i) the liquidation value of the Series B Preferred Stock to be redeemed and (ii) the fair market value of the shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of the Series B Preferred Stock to be redeemed plus, in either case, accrued and unpaid dividends on such shares of Series B Preferred Stock, to enable the trustee to provide for distributions to participants or to satisfy investment elections by participants under the Savings Plan. Delta is also required to redeem all of the outstanding shares of Series B Preferred Stock, at the redemption prices described below in the first sentence under *Optional Redemption* if (i) the Savings Plan is terminated or (ii) the ESOP is terminated.

Delta may, at its option, pay the redemption price required upon any mandatory redemption of shares of Series B Preferred Stock in cash or shares of common stock (valued at fair market value), or in a combination thereof. See Series B Preferred Stock *General* for a description of certain limitations imposed by Delaware law.

Optional Redemption

The Series B Preferred Stock is redeemable, in whole or in part, at \$72.00 per share, plus, in each case, an amount equal to all accrued and unpaid dividends thereon to the date fixed for redemption.

Delta may redeem the Series B Preferred Stock, in whole or in part, at a redemption price equal to the liquidation preference of the Series B Preferred Stock to be redeemed, if a change in any law or regulation has the effect of limiting or making unavailable to Delta any of the tax deductions for amounts paid on the shares of Series B Preferred

Stock when such amounts are used under Section 404(k)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code). Delta may also redeem any or all of the Series B Preferred Stock, at its option, at the Alternative Redemption Price if the Series B fails to qualify under Section 4975 of the Code. Upon the termination

Table of Contents

of a Savings Plan participant's employment, Delta may elect to redeem any or all of the Series B Preferred Stock held for the account of such participant at the Alternative Redemption Price.

Delta may, at its option, pay the redemption price required upon any voluntary redemption of shares of Series B Preferred Stock in cash or in shares of common stock (valued at fair market value), or in a combination thereof. See Series B Preferred Stock General for a description of certain limitations imposed by Delaware law.

Voting

The Savings Plan provides that shares of Series B Preferred Stock allocated to the account of a Savings Plan participant will be voted by the trustee in accordance with the participant's confidential voting instructions or, if no voting instructions are received by the trustee, in the same proportion as the votes cast on allocated shares of Series B Preferred Stock and common stock in the ESOP pursuant to participants' confidential voting instructions. The Savings Plan further provides that shares of Series B Preferred Stock not yet allocated to any participant's account will be voted by the trustee in proportion to the votes cast with respect to allocated shares of Series B Preferred Stock and common stock in the ESOP for which voting instructions are received.

Limitations on Directors' Liability

Our Certificate of Incorporation eliminates the personal liability of a director to us and our shareowners for monetary damages for certain breaches of his or her fiduciary duty as a director to the fullest extent permitted under the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware.

This provision offers persons who serve on our board of directors protection against awards of monetary damages resulting from certain breaches of their fiduciary duty, including grossly negligent business decisions made in connection with takeover proposals for us, and limits our ability or the ability of one of our shareowners to prosecute an action against a director for a breach of fiduciary duty.

Indemnification of Directors and Officers

Our Certificate provides that we will indemnify any of our directors, officers or employees to the fullest extent permitted by the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware against all expenses, liability and loss incurred in connection with any action, suit or proceeding in which any such person may be involved by reason of the fact that he or she is or was our director, officer or employee. We carry insurance policies in standard form indemnifying our directors and officers against liabilities arising from certain acts performed by them in their capacities as our directors and officers. These policies also indemnify us for any sums we may be required or permitted to pay by law to our directors and officers as indemnification for expenses they may have incurred.

Exchange Listing

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol **DAL**.

Anti-Takeover Effects of Delaware Law

Delta is subject to the business combination provisions of Section 203 of Delaware law. In general, such provisions prohibit a publicly held Delaware corporation from engaging in various business combination transactions with any interested stockholder for a period of three years after the date of the transaction in which the person became an interested stockholder, unless

prior to the date the interested stockholder obtained such status, the board of directors of the corporation approved either the business combination or the transaction that resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder;

upon consummation of the transaction which resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder, the stockholder owned at least 85% of the voting stock of the corporation outstanding at the time the transaction commenced; or

Table of Contents

on or subsequent to such date, the business combination is approved by the board of directors of the corporation and authorized at an annual or special meeting of shareowners by the affirmative vote of at least 66 2/3% of the outstanding voting stock which is not owned by the interested stockholder.

A business combination is defined to include mergers, asset sales and other transactions resulting in financial benefit to an interested stockholder. In general, an interested stockholder is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns (or within three years, did own) 15% or more of a corporation's voting stock. The statute could prohibit or delay mergers or other takeover or change in control attempts with respect to Delta and, accordingly, may discourage attempts to acquire Delta even though such a transaction may offer Delta's shareowners the opportunity to sell their stock at a price above the prevailing market price.

DESCRIPTION OF OFFERED PREFERRED STOCK

This prospectus describes certain general terms and provisions of our preferred stock. When we offer to sell a particular series of preferred stock, we will describe the specific terms of the securities in a supplement to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement will also indicate whether the general terms and provisions described in this prospectus apply to the particular series of preferred stock. The preferred stock will be issued under a certificate of designations relating to each series of preferred stock and is also subject to our Certificate of Incorporation.

We have summarized certain terms of the certificate of designations below. The summary is not complete. The certificate of designations will be filed with the SEC in connection with an offering of preferred stock.

Under the Certificate of Incorporation, our Board of Directors has the authority to

create one or more series of preferred stock,

issue shares of preferred stock in any series up to the maximum number of shares of preferred stock authorized, and

determine the preferences, rights, privileges and restrictions of any series.

Our Board may issue authorized shares of preferred stock, as well as authorized but unissued shares of common stock, without further shareholder action, unless shareholder action is required by applicable law or by the rules of a stock exchange or quotation system on which any series of our stock may be listed or quoted.

The prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any preferred stock being offered, including:

the number of shares and designation or title of the shares;

any liquidation preference per share;

any date of maturity;

any redemption, repayment or sinking fund provisions;

any dividend rate or rates and the dates of payment (or the method for determining the dividend rates or dates of payment);

any voting rights;

if other than the currency of the United States, the currency or currencies including composite currencies in which the preferred stock is denominated and/or in which payments will or may be payable;

the method by which amounts in respect of the preferred stock may be calculated and any commodities, currencies or indices, or value, rate or price, relevant to such calculation;

Table of Contents

whether the preferred stock is convertible or exchangeable and, if so, the securities or rights into which the preferred stock is convertible or exchangeable, and the terms and conditions of conversion or exchange;

the place or places where dividends and other payments on the preferred stock will be payable; and

any additional voting, dividend, liquidation, redemption and other rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions.

All shares of preferred stock offered will be fully paid and non-assessable. Any shares of preferred stock that are issued will have priority over the common stock with respect to dividend or liquidation rights or both.

Our Board of Directors could create and issue a series of preferred stock with rights, privileges or restrictions which effectively discriminates against an existing or prospective holder of preferred stock as a result of the holder beneficially owning or commencing a tender offer for a substantial amount of common stock. One of the effects of authorized but unissued and unreserved shares of capital stock may be to make it more difficult or discourage an attempt by a potential acquirer to obtain control of our company by means of a merger, tender offer, proxy contest or otherwise. This protects the continuity of our management. The issuance of these shares of capital stock may defer or prevent a change in control of our company without any further shareholder action.

The transfer agent for each series of preferred stock will be described in the prospectus supplement.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

This prospectus describes certain general terms and provisions of the debt securities. The debt securities will constitute either senior or subordinated debt of Delta. We will issue debt securities that will be senior debt under the senior debt indenture between us and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.] as senior debt trustee. We will issue debt securities that will be subordinated debt under the subordinated debt indenture between us and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A., as subordinated debt trustee. This prospectus refers to the senior debt indenture and the subordinated debt indenture individually as the indenture and collectively as the indentures. This prospectus refers to the senior debt trustee and the subordinated debt trustee individually as the trustee and collectively as the trustees. When we offer to sell a particular series of debt securities, we will describe the specific terms for the securities in a supplement to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement will also indicate whether the general terms and provisions described in this prospectus apply to a particular series of debt securities.

We have summarized certain terms and provisions of the indentures. The summary is not complete. The indentures have been incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement for these securities that we have filed with the SEC. You should read the indentures for the provisions which may be important to you. The indentures are subject to and governed by the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended. The indentures are substantially identical, except for the provisions relating to subordination and covenants. See **Subordinated Debt** and **Covenants** below for additional information.

Neither indenture will limit the amount of debt securities which we may issue. We may issue debt securities up to an aggregate principal amount as we may authorize from time to time. The prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any debt securities being offered, including:

classification as senior or subordinated debt securities;

ranking of the specific series of debt securities relative to other outstanding indebtedness, including subsidiaries' debt;

if the debt securities are subordinated, the aggregate amount of outstanding indebtedness, as of a recent date, that is senior to the subordinated securities, and any limitation on the issuance of additional senior indebtedness;

the designation, aggregate principal amount and authorized denominations;

Table of Contents

the maturity date;

the interest rate, if any, and the method for calculating the interest rate;

the interest payment dates and the record dates for the interest payments;

any mandatory or optional redemption terms or prepayment, conversion, sinking fund or exchangeability or convertibility provisions;

the place where we will pay principal and interest;

if other than denominations of \$1,000 or multiples of \$1,000, the denominations the debt securities will be issued in;

whether the debt securities will be issued in the form of global securities or certificates;

additional provisions, if any, relating to the defeasance of the debt securities;

the currency or currencies, if other than the currency of the United States, in which principal and interest will be paid;

any United States federal income tax consequences;

the dates on which premium, if any, will be paid;

our right, if any, to defer payment interest and the maximum length of this deferral period;

any listing on a securities exchange;

the initial public offering price; and

other specific terms, including any additional events of default or covenants.

Senior Debt

We will issue under the senior debt indenture the debt securities that will constitute part of the senior debt of Delta. These senior debt securities will rank equally and pari passu with all other unsecured and unsubordinated debt of Delta.

Subordinated Debt

We will issue under the subordinated debt indenture the debt securities that will constitute part of the subordinated debt of Delta. These subordinated debt securities will be subordinate and junior in right of payment, to the extent and in the manner set forth in the subordinated debt indenture, to all senior indebtedness of Delta. The subordinated debt indenture defines senior indebtedness as obligations of, or guaranteed or assumed by, Delta for borrowed money or evidenced by bonds, debentures, notes or other similar instruments, and amendments, renewals, extensions, modifications and refundings of any such indebtedness or obligation. Senior indebtedness does not include nonrecourse obligations, the subordinated debt securities or any other obligations specifically designated as being subordinate in right of payment to senior indebtedness. See the subordinated debt indenture for additional information.

In general, the holders of all senior indebtedness are first entitled to receive payment of the full amount unpaid on senior indebtedness before the holders of any of the subordinated debt securities or coupons are entitled to receive a payment on account of the principal or interest on the indebtedness evidenced by the subordinated debt securities in certain events. These events include:

any insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings, or any receivership, liquidation, reorganization or other similar proceedings which concern Delta or a substantial part of its property;

Table of Contents

a default having occurred for the payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest on or other monetary amounts due and payable on any senior indebtedness or any other default having occurred concerning any senior indebtedness, which permits the holder or holders of any senior indebtedness to accelerate the maturity of any senior indebtedness with notice or lapse of time, or both. Such an event of default must have continued beyond the period of grace, if any, provided for such event of default, and such an event of default shall not have been cured or waived or shall not have ceased to exist; or

the principal of, and accrued interest on, any series of the subordinated debt securities having been declared due and payable upon an event of default pursuant to the subordinated debt indenture. This declaration must not have been rescinded and annulled as provided in the subordinated debt indenture.

If this prospectus is being delivered in connection with a series of subordinated debt securities, the accompanying prospectus supplement or the information incorporated in this prospectus by reference will set forth the approximate amount of senior indebtedness outstanding as of the end of the most recent fiscal quarter.

Events of Default

When we use the term **Event of Default** in the indentures with respect to the debt securities of any series, here are some examples of what we mean:

- (1) default in paying interest on the debt securities when it becomes due and the default continues for a period of 30 days or more;
- (2) default in paying principal, or premium, if any, on the debt securities when due and the default continues for a period of 5 days or more;
- (3) a failure to comply with or observe in any material respect any covenant in the indenture (other than defaults specified in clause (1) or (2) above) for 60 days after we receive written notice from the trustee or the trustee receives notice from the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the series;
- (4) certain events involving our bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization; or
- (5) any other Events of Default set forth in the prospectus supplement.

If an Event of Default (other than an Event of Default specified in clause (4) with respect to Delta) under each indenture occurs with respect to the debt securities of any series and is continuing, then the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may by written notice, and the trustee at the request of the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of such series will, require us to repay immediately the entire principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series (or such lesser amount as may be provided in the terms of the securities), together with all accrued and unpaid interest and premium, if any.

If an Event of Default under the indenture specified in clause (4) with respect to Delta occurs and is continuing, then the entire principal amount of the outstanding debt securities (or such lesser amount as may be provided in the terms of the securities) will automatically become due immediately and payable without any declaration or other act on the part of the trustee or any holder.

After a declaration of acceleration or any automatic acceleration under clause (4) described above, the holders of a majority in principal amount of outstanding debt securities of any series may rescind this accelerated payment requirement if all existing Events of Default, except for nonpayment of the principal and interest on the debt securities

of that series that has become due solely as a result of the accelerated payment requirement, have been cured or waived and if the rescission of acceleration would not conflict with any judgment or decree. The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series also have the right to waive past defaults, except a default in paying principal or interest on any outstanding debt security, or in respect of a covenant or a provision that cannot be modified or amended without the consent of all holders of the debt securities of that series.

Table of Contents

Holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series may seek to institute a proceeding only after they have made written request, and offered reasonable indemnity, to the trustee to institute a proceeding and the trustee has failed to do so within 60 days after it received this notice. In addition, within this 60-day period the trustee must not have received directions inconsistent with this written request by holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series. These limitations do not apply, however, to a suit instituted by a holder of a debt security for the enforcement of the payment of principal, interest or any premium on or after the due dates for such payment.

During the existence of an Event of Default, the trustee is required to exercise the rights and powers vested in it under the indenture and use the same degree of care and skill in its exercise as a prudent person would under the circumstances in the conduct of that person's own affairs. If an Event of Default has occurred and is continuing, the trustee is not under any obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers at the request or direction of any of the holders unless the holders have offered to the trustee reasonable security or indemnity. Subject to certain provisions, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series 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.

The trustee will, within 45 days after any Default occurs, give notice of the Default to the holders of the debt securities of that series, unless the Default was already cured or waived. Unless there is a default in paying principal, interest or any premium when due, the trustee can withhold giving notice to the holders if it determines in good faith that the withholding of notice is in the interest of the holders.

We are required to furnish to each trustee an annual statement as to compliance with all conditions and covenants under the indenture.

Modification and Waiver

Each indenture may be amended or modified without the consent of any holder of debt securities in order to:

cure ambiguities, defects or inconsistencies;

provide for the assumption of our obligations in the case of a merger or consolidation;

make any change that would provide any additional rights or benefits to the holders of the debt securities of a series;

add guarantors with respect to the debt securities of any series;

secure the debt securities of a series;

establish the form or forms of debt securities of any series;

maintain the qualification of the indenture under the Trust Indenture Act; or

make any change that does not adversely affect the rights of any holder.

Other amendments and modifications of each indenture or the debt securities issued may be made with the consent of the holders of not less than a majority of the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series affected by the amendment or modification. However, no modification or amendment may, without the consent of the holder of each outstanding debt security affected:

reduce the principal amount, or extend the fixed maturity, of the debt securities, alter or waive the redemption provisions of the debt securities;

change the currency in which principal, any premium or interest is paid;

reduce the percentage in principal amount outstanding of debt securities of any series which must consent to an amendment, supplement or waiver or consent to take any action;

Table of Contents

impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment on the debt securities;

waive a payment default with respect to the debt securities or any guarantor;

reduce the interest rate or extend the time for payment of interest on the debt securities;

adversely affect the ranking of the debt securities of any series;

release any guarantor from any of its obligations under its guarantee or the indenture, except in compliance with the terms of the indenture.

The subordinated debt indenture may not be amended to alter the subordination of any outstanding subordinated debt securities without the consent of each holder of senior indebtedness then outstanding that would be adversely affected by such an amendment. See section [] of the subordinated debt indenture.

Covenants

Consolidation, Merger or Sale of Assets

We will not consolidate or combine with or merge with or into or, directly or indirectly, sell, assign, convey, lease, transfer or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of our properties and assets to any person or persons in a single transaction or through a series of transactions, unless:

Delta shall be the continuing person or, if Delta is not the continuing person, the resulting, surviving or transferee person (the surviving entity) is a company organized and existing under the laws of the United States or any State or territory;

the surviving entity will expressly assume all of our obligations under the debt securities and each indenture, and will, if required by law to effectuate the assumption, execute supplemental indentures which will be delivered to the trustees and will be in form and substance reasonably satisfactory to the trustees;

immediately after giving effect to such transaction or series of transactions on a pro forma basis, no default has occurred and is continuing; and

Delta or the surviving entity will have delivered to the trustee an officers certificate and opinion of counsel stating that the transaction or series of transactions and a supplemental indenture, if any, complies with this covenant and that all conditions precedent in the indenture relating to the transaction or series of transactions have been satisfied.

If any consolidation or merger or any sale, assignment, conveyance, lease, transfer or other disposition of all or substantially all of our assets occurs in accordance with the indentures, the successor corporation will succeed to, and be substituted for, and may exercise every right and power of Delta under the indentures with the same effect as if such successor corporation had been named as Delta. Except for (1) any lease or (2) any sale, assignment, conveyance, transfer, lease or other disposition to certain subsidiaries of Delta, we will be discharged from all obligations and covenants under the indentures and the debt securities.

Satisfaction, Discharge and Covenant Defeasance

We may terminate our obligations under each indenture, when:

either:

all debt securities of any series issued that have been authenticated and delivered have been delivered to the trustee for cancellation; or

all the debt securities of any series issued that have not been delivered to the trustee for cancellation will become due and payable within one year (a Discharge) and we have made irrevocable arrangements satisfactory to the trustee for the giving of notice of redemption by such trustee in our

Table of Contents

name, and at our expense and we have irrevocably deposited or caused to be deposited with the trustee sufficient funds to pay and discharge the entire indebtedness on the series of debt securities to pay principal, interest and any premium;

we have paid or caused to be paid all other sums then due and payable under such indenture; and

we have delivered to the trustee an officers certificate and an opinion of counsel, each stating that all conditions precedent under such indenture relating to the satisfaction and discharge of such indenture have been complied with.

We may elect to have our obligations under each indenture discharged with respect to the outstanding debt securities of any series (legal defeasance). Legal defeasance means that we will be deemed to have paid and discharged the entire indebtedness represented by the outstanding debt securities of such series under such indenture, except for:

the rights of holders of the debt securities to receive principal, interest and any premium when due;

our obligations with respect to the debt securities concerning issuing temporary debt securities, registration of transfer of debt securities, mutilated, destroyed, lost or stolen debt securities and the maintenance of an office or agency for payment for security payments held in trust;

the rights, powers, trusts, duties and immunities of the trustee; and

the defeasance provisions of the indenture.

In addition, we may elect to have our obligations released with respect to certain covenants in each indenture (covenant defeasance). Any omission to comply with these obligations will not constitute a default or an event of default with respect to the debt securities of any series. In the event covenant defeasance occurs, certain events, not including non-payment, bankruptcy and insolvency events, described under Events of Default will no longer constitute an event of default for that series.

In order to exercise either legal defeasance or covenant defeasance with respect to outstanding debt securities of any series:

we must irrevocably have deposited or caused to be deposited with the trustee as trust funds for the purpose of making the following payments, specifically pledged as security for, and dedicated solely to the benefits of the holders of the debt securities of a series:

money in an amount;

U.S. Government Obligations; or

a combination of money and U.S. Government Obligations,

in each case sufficient without reinvestment, in the written opinion of an internationally recognized firm of independent public accountants to pay and discharge, and which shall be applied by the trustee to pay and discharge, all of the principal, interest and any premium at due date or maturity or if we have made irrevocable arrangements satisfactory to the trustee for the giving of notice of redemption by the trustee in our name and at our expense, the redemption date;

in the case of legal defeasance, we have delivered to the trustee an opinion of counsel stating that, under then applicable Federal income tax law, the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize gain or loss for federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit, defeasance and discharge to be effected and will be subject to the same federal income tax as would be the case if the deposit, defeasance and discharge did not occur;

Table of Contents

in the case of covenant defeasance, we have delivered to the trustee an opinion of counsel to the effect that the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit and covenant defeasance to be effected and will be subject to the same federal income tax as would be the case if the deposit and covenant defeasance did not occur;

no default with respect to the outstanding debt securities of that series has occurred and is continuing at the time of such deposit after giving effect to the deposit or, in the case of legal defeasance, no default relating to bankruptcy or insolvency has occurred and is continuing at any time on or before the 91st day after the date of such deposit, it being understood that this condition is not deemed satisfied until after the 91st day;

in the case of the subordinated indenture, we deliver to the trustee for the subordinated debt indenture an opinion of counsel to the effect that

- (1) the trust funds will not be subject to any rights of holders of senior indebtedness and
- (2) after the 91st day following the deposit, the trust funds will not be subject to the effect of any applicable bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization or similar laws affecting creditors' rights generally;

the legal defeasance or covenant defeasance will not cause the trustee to have a conflicting interest within the meaning of the Trust Indenture Act, assuming all debt securities of a series were in default within the meaning of such Act;

the legal defeasance or covenant defeasance will not result in a breach or violation of, or constitute a default under, any other agreement or instrument to which we are a party;

the legal defeasance or covenant defeasance will not result in the trust arising from such deposit constituting an investment company within the meaning of the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, unless the trust is registered under such Act or exempt from registration; and

we have delivered to the trustee an officers' certificate and an opinion of counsel stating that all conditions precedent with respect to the defeasance or covenant defeasance have been complied with.

DESCRIPTION OF RIGHTS

We may issue rights to purchase our common stock. Rights may be issued independently or together with any other securities and may be attached to, or separate from, such securities. Each series of rights will be issued under a separate rights agreement to be entered into between us and Wells Fargo Minnesota Bank, N.A. The terms of any rights to be issued and a description of the material provisions of the applicable rights agreement will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may issue warrants to purchase our senior and/or subordinated debt securities or other rights, including rights to receive payment in cash or securities based on the value, rate or price of one or more specified commodities, currencies, securities or indices, or any combination of the foregoing. Warrants may be issued independently or together with any other securities and may be attached to, or separate from, such securities. Each series of warrants will be issued under a separate warrant agreement to be entered into between us and a warrant agent. The terms of any warrants to be issued and a description of the material provisions of the applicable warrant agreement will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the following terms of any warrants in respect of which this prospectus is being delivered:

the title of such warrants;

the aggregate number of such warrants;

23

Table of Contents

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

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

the securities or other rights, including rights to receive payment in cash or securities based on the value, rate or price of one or more specified commodities, currencies, securities or indices, or any combination of the foregoing, purchasable upon exercise of such warrants;

the price at which and the currency or currencies, in which the securities or other rights purchasable upon exercise of such warrants may be purchased;

the date on which the right to exercise such warrants shall commence and the date on which such right shall expire;

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

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

if applicable, the date on and after which such warrants and the related securities will be separately transferable;

information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any;

if applicable, a discussion of any material United States Federal income tax considerations; and

any other terms of such warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of such warrants.

DESCRIPTION OF PURCHASE CONTRACTS

We may issue purchase contracts for the purchase of our common stock. Each purchase contract will entitle the holder thereof to purchase common stock at a specified purchase price, which may be based on a formula, all as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. We may, however, satisfy our obligations, if any, with respect to any purchase contract by delivering the cash value of such purchase contract or the cash value of the property otherwise deliverable or, in the case of purchase contracts on underlying currencies, by delivering the underlying currencies, as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. The applicable prospectus supplement will also specify the methods by which the holders may purchase such common stock, and any acceleration, cancellation or termination provisions or other provisions relating to the settlement of a purchase contract.

The purchase contracts may require us to make periodic payments to the holders thereof or vice versa, which payments may be deferred to the extent set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, and those payments may be unsecured or prefunded on some basis. The purchase contracts may require the holders thereof to secure their obligations in a specified manner to be described in the applicable prospectus supplement. Alternatively, purchase contracts may require holders to satisfy their obligations thereunder when the purchase contracts are issued. Our obligation to settle such pre-paid purchase contracts on the relevant settlement date may constitute indebtedness. Accordingly, pre-paid purchase contracts will be issued under either the senior indenture or the subordinated indenture.

DESCRIPTION OF UNITS

As specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may issue units consisting of one or more purchase contracts, rights, warrants, debt securities, shares of preferred stock, shares of common stock or any combination of such securities issued by us or by third parties. The applicable prospectus supplement will describe:

Table of Contents

the terms of the units and of the purchase contracts, rights, warrants, debt securities, preferred stock and common stock comprising the units, including whether and under what circumstances the securities comprising the units may be traded separately;

a description of the terms of any unit agreement governing the units; and

a description of the provisions for the payment, settlement, transfer or exchange of the units.

FORMS OF SECURITIES

Each debt security, right, warrant and unit will be represented either by a certificate issued in definitive form to a particular investor or by one or more global securities representing the entire issuance of securities. Certificated securities in definitive form and global securities will be issued in registered form. Definitive securities name you or your nominee as the owner of the security, and in order to transfer or exchange these securities or to receive payments other than interest or other interim payments, you or your nominee must physically deliver the securities to the trustee, registrar, paying agent or other agent, as applicable. Global securities name a depository or its nominee as the owner of the debt securities, rights, warrants or units represented by these global securities. The depository maintains a computerized system that will reflect each investor's beneficial ownership of the securities through an account maintained by the investor with its broker/dealer, bank, trust company or other representative, as we explain more fully below.

Global Securities

Registered Global Securities. We may issue the registered debt securities, rights, warrants and units in the form of one or more fully registered global securities that will be deposited with a depository or its nominee identified in the applicable prospectus supplement and registered in the name of that depository or nominee. In those cases, one or more registered global securities will be issued in a denomination or aggregate denominations equal to the portion of the aggregate principal or face amount of the securities to be represented by registered global securities. Unless and until it is exchanged in whole for securities in definitive registered form, a registered global security may not be transferred except as a whole by and among the depository for the registered global security, the nominees of the depository or any successors of the depository or those nominees.

If not described below, any specific terms of the depository arrangement with respect to any securities to be represented by a registered global security will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to those securities. We anticipate that the following provisions will apply to all depository arrangements.

Ownership of beneficial interests in a registered global security will be limited to persons, called participants, that have accounts with the depository or persons that may hold interests through participants. Upon the issuance of a registered global security, the depository will credit, on its book-entry registration and transfer system, the participants accounts with the respective principal or face amounts of the securities beneficially owned by the participants. Any dealers, underwriters or agents participating in the distribution of the securities will designate the accounts to be credited. Ownership of beneficial interests in a registered global security will be shown on, and the transfer of ownership interests will be effected only through, records maintained by the depository, 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 some purchasers of securities take physical delivery of these securities in definitive form. These laws may impair your ability to own, transfer or pledge beneficial interests in registered global securities.

So long as the depository, or its nominee, is the registered owner of a registered global security, that depository or its nominee, as the case may be, will be considered the sole owner or holder of the securities represented by the

registered global security for all purposes under the applicable indenture, warrant agreement, guaranteed trust preferred security or unit agreement. Except as described below, owners of beneficial interests in a registered global security will not be entitled to have the securities represented by the registered global security registered in their names, will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of the securities in definitive form and will not be considered the owners or holders of the securities under the applicable indenture, warrant agreement, guaranteed

Table of Contents

trust preferred security or unit agreement. Accordingly, each person owning a beneficial interest in a registered global security must rely on the procedures of the depository for that registered global security and, if that person is not a participant, on the procedures of the participant through which the person owns its interest, to exercise any rights of a holder under the applicable indenture, warrant agreement, guaranteed trust preferred security or unit agreement. We understand that under existing industry practices, if we request any action of holders or if an owner of a beneficial interest in a registered global security desires to give or take any action that a holder is entitled to give or take under the applicable indenture, warrant agreement, guaranteed trust preferred security or unit agreement, the depository for the registered global security would authorize the participants holding the relevant beneficial interests to give or take that action, and the participants would authorize beneficial owners owning through them to give or take that action or would otherwise act upon the instructions of beneficial owners holding through them.

Principal, premium, if any, and interest payments on debt securities, and any payments to holders with respect to warrants, guaranteed trust preferred securities or units, represented by a registered global security registered in the name of a depository or its nominee will be made to the depository or its nominee, as the case may be, as the registered owner of the registered global security. None of Delta, the trustees, the warrant agents, the unit agents or any other agent of Delta, agent of the trustees or agent of the warrant agents or unit agents will have any responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records relating to payments made on account of beneficial ownership interests in the registered global security or for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to those beneficial ownership interests.

We expect that the depository for any of the securities represented by a registered global security, upon receipt of any payment of principal, premium, interest or other distribution of underlying securities or other property to holders on that registered global security, will immediately credit participants' accounts in amounts proportionate to their respective beneficial interests in that registered global security as shown on the records of the depository. We also expect that payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in a registered global security held through 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.

If the depository for any of these securities represented by a registered global security is at any time unwilling or unable to continue as depository or ceases to be a clearing agency registered under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and a successor depository registered as a clearing agency under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 is not appointed by us within 90 days, we will issue securities in definitive form in exchange for the registered global security that had been held by the depository. Any securities issued in definitive form in exchange for a registered global security will be registered in the name or names that the depository gives to the relevant trustee, warrant agent, unit agent or other relevant agent of ours or theirs. It is expected that the depository's instructions will be based upon directions received by the depository from participants with respect to ownership of beneficial interests in the registered global security that had been held by the depository.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities in any of three ways or in any combination: (a) through underwriters or dealers; (b) directly to a limited number of purchasers or to a single purchaser; or (c) through agents. The prospectus supplement will set forth the terms of the offering of such securities, including

- (a) the name or names of any underwriters, dealers or agents and the amounts of securities underwritten or purchased by each of them,

- (b) the initial public offering price of the securities and the proceeds to us and any discounts, commissions or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers, and
- (c) any securities exchanges on which the securities may be listed.

Table of Contents

Any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers may be changed from time to time.

If underwriters are used in the sale of any securities, the securities will be acquired by the underwriters for their own account and may be resold 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. The securities may be either offered to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters, or directly by underwriters. Generally, the underwriters' obligations to purchase the securities will be subject to certain conditions precedent. The underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of the securities if they purchase any of the securities.

We may sell the securities through agents from time to time. The prospectus supplement will name any agent involved in the offer or sale of the securities and any commissions we pay to them. Generally, any agent will be acting on a best efforts basis for the period of its appointment.

We may authorize underwriters, dealers or agents to solicit offers by certain purchasers to purchase the securities from Delta at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The contracts will be subject only to those conditions set forth in the prospectus supplement, and the prospectus supplement will set forth any commissions we pay for solicitation of these contracts.

Agents and underwriters may be entitled to indemnification by us against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribution with respect to payments which the agents or underwriters may be required to make in respect thereof. Agents and underwriters may be customers of, engage in transactions with, or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

One or more firms, referred to as remarketing firms, may also offer or sell the securities, if the prospectus supplement so indicates, in connection with a remarketing arrangement upon their purchase. Remarketing firms will act as principals for their own accounts or as agents for us. These remarketing firms will offer or sell the securities in accordance with a redemption or repayment pursuant to the terms of the securities. The prospectus supplement will identify any remarketing firm and the terms of its agreement, if any, with us and will describe the remarketing firm's compensation. Remarketing firms may be deemed to be underwriters in connection with the securities they remarket. Remarketing firms may be entitled under agreements that may be entered into with us to indemnification by us against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, and may be customers of, engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

We and the underwriters may engage in derivative transactions involving the securities. These derivatives may consist of short sale transactions and other hedging activities. The underwriters may acquire a long or short position in the securities, hold or resell securities acquired and purchase options or futures on the securities and other derivative instruments with returns linked to or related to changes in the price of the securities. In order to facilitate these derivative transactions, we may enter into security lending or repurchase agreements with the underwriters. The underwriters may effect the derivative transactions through sales of the securities to the public, including short sales, or by lending the securities in order to facilitate short sale transactions by others. The underwriters may also use the securities purchased or borrowed from us or others (or, in the case of derivatives, securities received from us in settlement of those derivatives) to directly or indirectly settle sales of the securities or close out any related open borrowings of the securities.

Subject to the limitations under Rule 415(a)(4)(ii) under the Securities Act, we may offer our securities into an existing trading market on the terms described in the applicable prospectus supplement. Underwriters and dealers who may participate in any at-the-market offerings include [].

Table of Contents

VALIDITY OF SECURITIES

The validity of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is being delivered will be passed on for us by Davis Polk & Wardwell.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements as of December 31, 2004 and 2003, and for each of the three years in the period ended December 31, 2004, and management's report on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2004, incorporated in this prospectus by reference from Delta's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2004, have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in (1) their report dated March 9, 2005 relating to the consolidated financial statements of Delta Air Lines, Inc. (which report expresses an unqualified opinion on the Company's consolidated financial statements and includes explanatory paragraphs relating to the Company's ability to continue as a going concern and the Company's change in its method of accounting for goodwill and other intangible assets, effective January 1, 2002, to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 142) and (2) their report dated March 9, 2005 relating to management's report on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting, which are incorporated herein by reference, and have been so incorporated in reliance upon the reports of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

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

The following table sets forth the costs and expenses payable by the Registrant in connection with the sale of the securities being registered hereby. All amounts are estimates except the registration fee.

	Amount to be Paid
Registration fee	\$ 58,850
Printing	25,000
Legal fees and expenses (including Blue Sky fees)	150,000
Trustee fees	2,500
Accounting fees and expenses	30,000
Miscellaneous	2,920
TOTAL	\$ 269,270

Item 15. *Indemnification of Directors and Officers*

Section 145 of the Delaware General Corporation Law provides that a corporation may indemnify directors and officers as well as other employees and individuals against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with any threatened, pending or completed actions, suits or proceedings in which such person is made a party by reason of such person being or having been a director, officer, employee or agent to the Registrant. The Delaware General Corporation Law provides that Section 145 is not exclusive of other rights to which those seeking indemnification may be entitled under any bylaw, agreement, vote of shareowners or disinterested directors or otherwise. The Registrant's Certificate of Incorporation provides for indemnification by the Registrant of its directors, officers and employees to the fullest extent permitted by the Delaware General Corporation Law.

Section 102(b)(7) of the Delaware General Corporation Law permits a corporation to provide in its certificate of incorporation that a director of the corporation shall not be personally liable to the corporation or its shareowners for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except for liability (i) for any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to the corporation or its shareowners, (ii) for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (iii) for unlawful payments of dividends or unlawful stock repurchases, redemptions or other distributions, or (iv) for any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit. The Registrant's Certificate of Incorporation provides for such limitation of liability.

The Registrant maintains standard policies of insurance under which coverage is provided (a) to its directors and officers against loss rising from claims made by reason of breach of duty or other wrongful act, and (b) to the Registrant with respect to payments which may be made by the Registrant to such officers and directors pursuant to the above indemnification provision or otherwise as a matter of law.

The proposed forms of Underwriting Agreement filed as Exhibit 1.1 to this Registration Statement provide for indemnification of directors and officers of the Registrant by the underwriters against certain liabilities.

Table of Contents**Item 16. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules**

(a) The following exhibits are filed as part of this Registration Statement:

Exhibit No.	Document
1.1	Form of Underwriting Agreement.*
4.1	Delta's Certificate of Incorporation (Filed as Exhibit 3.1 to Delta's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 1998).**
4.2	Form of Senior Debt Indenture between the Registrant and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.***
4.3	Form of Subordinated Debt Indenture between the Registrant and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.***
4.4	Form of Senior Note (included in Exhibit 4.2).***
4.5	Form of Subordinated Note (included in Exhibit 4.3).***
4.6	Form of Rights Agreement.****
4.7	Form of Warrant Agreement.****
4.8	Form of Purchase Contract.****
4.9	Form of Units Agreement.****
5.1	Opinion of Davis Polk & Wardwell.***
12.1	Statement regarding computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges for each year in the five-year period ended December 31, 2004 (Filed as Exhibit 12.1 to Delta's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2004).**
12.2	Statement regarding computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends for each year in the five-year period ended December 31, 2004.***
23.1	Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP.
23.2	Consent of Davis Polk & Wardwell (included in Exhibit 5.1).***
24.1	Power of Attorney (included on the signature page of the Registration Statement).
25.1	Statement of Eligibility on Form T-1 of The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.***
25.2	Statement of Eligibility on Form T-1 of The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A. for Senior Debt Indenture.***
25.3	

Statement of Eligibility on Form T-1 of The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A. for
Subordinated Debt Indenture.***

- * To be filed on a Form 8-K and incorporated by reference prior to the issuance of any securities pursuant to this prospectus.
- ** Incorporated by reference.
- *** To be filed by amendment.

II-2

Table of Contents

**** To be filed on a Form 8-K and incorporated by reference prior to the issuance of such securities pursuant to this prospectus.

Item 17. Undertakings

- (a) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:
- (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made of securities registered hereby, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement 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.
 - (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 herein, 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.
- (b) 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 the 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.
- (c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrants pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the registrants have been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the 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 registrants will, unless in the opinion of their 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 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 Atlanta, State of Georgia, on the 28th day of March, 2005.

DELTA AIR LINES, INC.

By: /s/ Michael J. Palumbo

 Name Michael J. Palumbo
 Title: Executive Vice President and
 Chief Financial Officer

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints Gerald Grinstein, Michael J. Palumbo, and Todd G. Helvie, and each of them, his or her true and lawful attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full power of substitution and resubstitution, for him or her and in his or her name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to this registration statement and any and all additional registration statements pursuant to Rule 462(b) of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto, and all other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto each said attorney-in-fact and agents full power and authority to do and perform each and every act in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents or either of them or their or his or her substitute or substitutes may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the 28th day of March, 2005.

Signature	Title
/s/ Gerald Grinstein _____	Chief Executive Officer and Director (Principal Executive Officer)
Gerald Grinstein /s/ Michael J. Palumbo _____	Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial Officer and Principal Accounting Officer)
Michael J. Palumbo _____	Director
Edward H. Budd /s/ David R. Goode _____	Director
David R. Goode _____	Director
Arthur E. Johnson /s/ Karl J. Krapek _____	Director

Karl J. Krapek
/s/ Paula Rosput Reynolds

Director

Paula Rosput Reynolds

II-4

Table of Contents

Signature	Title
<hr/> <p>/s/ John F. Smith, Jr.</p>	Chairman of the Board
<hr/> <p>John F. Smith, Jr. /s/ Joan E. Spero</p>	Director
<hr/> <p>Joan E. Spero</p>	Director
<hr/> <p>Larry D. Thompson /s/ Kenneth B. Woodrow</p>	Director
<hr/> <p>Kenneth B. Woodrow</p>	

Table of Contents

EXHIBIT INDEX

Exhibit No.	Document
1.1	Form of Underwriting Agreement.*
4.1	Delta's Certificate of Incorporation (Filed as Exhibit 3.1 to Delta's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 1998).**
4.2	Form of Indenture between the Registrant and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.***
4.3	Form of Note (included in Exhibit 4.2).***
4.4	Form of Senior Debt Indenture between the Registrant and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.***
4.5	Form of Subordinated Debt Indenture between the Registrant and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.***
4.6	Form of Senior Note (included in Exhibit 4.4).***
4.7	Form of Subordinated Note (included in Exhibit 4.5).***
4.8	Form of Rights Agreement.****
4.9	Form of Warrant Agreement.****
4.10	Form of Purchase Contract.****
4.11	Form of Units Agreement.****
5.1	Opinion of Davis Polk & Wardwell.***
12.1	Statement regarding computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges for each year in the five-year period ended December 31, 2004 (Filed as Exhibit 12.1 to Delta's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2004).**
12.2	Statement regarding computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends for each year in the five-year period ended December 31, 2004.***
23.1	Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP.
23.2	Consent of Davis Polk & Wardwell (included in Exhibit 5.1).***
24.1	Power of Attorney (included on the signature page of the Registration Statement).
25.1	Statement of Eligibility on Form T-1 of The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A.***
25.2	Statement of Eligibility on Form T-1 of The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A. for Senior Debt Indenture.***

25.3 Statement of Eligibility on Form T-1 of The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A. for Subordinated Debt Indenture.***

- * To be filed on a Form 8-K and incorporated by reference prior to the issuance of any securities pursuant to this prospectus.
- ** Incorporated by reference.
- *** To be filed by amendment.
- **** To be filed on a Form 8-K and incorporated by reference prior to the issuance of such securities pursuant to this prospectus.

II-6