

Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

ARCH COAL INC  
Form 424B2  
May 03, 2001

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT  
(To prospectus dated April 19, 2001)

Filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2);  
Registration Statement No. 333-58738

8,500,000 Shares

Arch Coal, Inc.

Common Stock

-----

We are selling 8,500,000 shares of common stock.

Our common stock trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "ACI". On May 2, 2001, the last sale price of the shares as reported on the New York Stock Exchange was \$33.00 per share.

Investing in our common stock involves risks that are described in the "Risk Factors" section beginning on page 3 of the accompanying prospectus, as supplemented in the "Supplemental Risk Factors" section beginning on page S-3 of this prospectus supplement.

-----

	Per Share	Total
	-----	-----
Public offering price.....	\$33.00	\$280,500,000
Underwriting discount.....	\$1.62	\$13,770,000
Proceeds, before expenses, to Arch Coal.....	\$31.38	\$266,730,000

The underwriters may also purchase up to an additional 1,275,000 shares from us at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount, within 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement to cover over-allotments.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The shares will be ready for delivery on or about May 8, 2001.

-----

Merrill Lynch & Co.

Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.

JPMorgan

Lehman Brothers

Morgan Stanley Dean Witter

-----

# Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

The date of this prospectus supplement is May 2, 2001.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Prospectus Supplement

	Page
	----
Supplemental Risk Factors.....	S-3
Use of Proceeds.....	S-5
Underwriting.....	S-6
Legal Matters.....	S-8

### Prospectus

Summary.....	1
Risk Factors.....	3
Forward Looking Statements.....	9
Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges.....	9
Use of Proceeds.....	9
Description of Debt Securities.....	10
Description of Preferred Stock.....	19
Description of Common Stock.....	21
Description of Depositary Shares.....	21
Description of Securities Warrants.....	23
Description of Capital Securities.....	24
Selling Stockholders.....	27
Plan of Distribution.....	27
Legal Matters.....	28
Experts.....	28

-----

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We have not, and the underwriters have not, authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We are not, and the underwriters are not, making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference is accurate only as of their respective dates. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

S-2

### SUPPLEMENTAL RISK FACTORS

Any investment in our common stock will be subject to risks, including risks inherent in our business. The value of your investment could decline and could result in a loss. You should carefully consider the following factors as well as factors described in the "Risk Factors" section of the accompanying prospectus and the other information contained and incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus before deciding to

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

invest in our common stock.

We have a substantial amount of debt relative to our equity capitalization, which limits our flexibility and imposes restrictions on us, and a downturn in economic or industry conditions may materially affect our ability to meet our future debt service and liquidity needs.

As of March 31, 2001, we had outstanding consolidated indebtedness of \$1.052 billion, representing approximately 77.5% of our capital employed. As a result, we will have significant debt service obligations, and the terms of our credit agreements limit our flexibility and impose a number of restrictions upon us. We also have significant lease and royalty obligations. Debt service consists of payments of interest and principal. Before giving effect to the application of the net proceeds of this offering to the reduction of our indebtedness, we are required to make aggregate principal payments on our indebtedness of \$32.3 million for the remainder of 2001, \$58.5 million in 2002, \$957.2 million in 2003, \$0.6 million in each of 2004 and 2005 and \$2.9 million, in the aggregate, thereafter. Our ability to satisfy our debt service and lease and royalty obligations, and our ability to effect any refinancing of our indebtedness, will depend upon our future operating performance, which will be affected by prevailing economic conditions in the markets that we serve and financial, business and other factors, many of which are beyond our control. We may be unable to generate sufficient cash flow from operations and future borrowings or other financing may be unavailable in an amount sufficient to enable us to fund our debt service, lease and royalty payment obligations or our other liquidity needs.

Our relative amount of debt could have material consequences to our business, including, but not limited to:

- . making it more difficult for us to satisfy our debt covenants and debt service, lease payment and other obligations;
- . making it more difficult for us to pay quarterly dividends as we have in the past;
- . increasing our vulnerability to general adverse economic and industry conditions;
- . limiting our ability to obtain additional financing to fund future acquisitions, working capital, capital expenditures or other general corporate requirements;
- . reducing the availability of cash flow from operations to fund acquisitions, working capital, capital expenditures or other general corporate purposes;
- . limiting our flexibility in planning for, or reacting to, changes in our business and the industry in which we compete; and
- . placing us at a competitive disadvantage when compared to competitors with less relative amounts of debt.

A significant portion of our debt bears interest at variable rates that are linked to short-term interest rates. If interest rates rise, our costs relative to those obligations would also rise.

Pending litigation could result in the permanent closure of all or a portion of our mining operations in West Virginia, which would cause our profitability to materially decline and could cause our stock price to decline.

A federal district court injunction that prohibits the West Virginia

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

Division of Environmental Protection from issuing permits for our Dal-Tex mine to use valley fill mining techniques resulted in the

S-3

shutdown of this mine in July 1999. A subsequent order prohibits the construction or expansion of valley fills in West Virginia. Valley fill or mountaintop mining techniques used in Central Appalachia involve the creation of large, engineered works into which excess earth and rock extracted during surface mining are placed. The plaintiffs in the litigation alleged, among other things, that the issuance of mining permits without the preparation of an environmental impact statement, or EIS, that would evaluate the environmental effects of mountaintop mining and the construction of valley fills violated environmental laws. We appealed the order specific to our Dal-Tex operations, and we, the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection and others appealed the broader order concerning valley fills. On April 24, 2001, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit vacated the judgment of the district court with respect to the injunction that prohibited the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection from issuing permits to use valley fill mining techniques. The decision of the Fourth Circuit could be subject to a possible appeal to the United States Supreme Court, and does not preclude the plaintiffs from pursuing remedies in state court. Because it is not financially viable for coal producers to operate some mining properties without valley fills, if the decision of the Fourth Circuit is overturned or state court remedies similar to those obtained in the federal district court are available to the plaintiffs, we and other coal producers in West Virginia may be forced to close all or a portion of our mining operations in West Virginia, to the extent those operations are dependent on the use of valley fills. If we permanently close these operations in West Virginia, our profitability will decline because we will record various charges in connection with the closures. We will also experience a loss of revenues from these operations. For the year ended December 31, 1998, we received approximately \$100.8 million in revenues from our Dal-Tex mining operations, which constituted 6.7% of our total 1998 revenues. A settlement agreement entered into between the parties will require the preparation of an EIS prior to the issuance of permits for the construction of valley fills. The preparation of these statements is time-consuming and is sometimes the subject of litigation. As a result, even though the district court decision has been overturned, we do not expect to reopen our Dal-Tex mining operation for at least several months, subject to then-existing market conditions.

Our profitability may be adversely impacted by unanticipated mine operating conditions and other factors that are not within our control, which could cause our quarterly or annual results to decrease and our stock price to decline.

Our mining operations are inherently subject to changing conditions that can affect levels of production and production costs at particular mines for varying lengths of time and can result in decreases in our profitability. Weather conditions, equipment replacement or repair, fires, variations in thickness of the layer, or seam, of coal, amounts of rock and other natural materials and other geological conditions, have had, and can be expected in the future to have, a significant impact on our operating results. Our West Elk mine in Colorado, which accounted for 7.0% of our total 1999 revenues, has recently encountered higher-than-expected methane levels following the relocation of its longwall mining system to a new reserve area in late February 2001. The higher methane levels have resulted in intermittent closures of all or part of the mine and have resulted in significantly lower coal production at West Elk than we would normally expect. If we are unable to adequately control methane levels at the mine, we may be forced to operate the mine at lower levels of production than planned, or idle the mine. In such an event, our

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

revenues and profitability would be adversely affected. In addition, a prolonged disruption of production at any of our other principal mines, particularly our Mingo Logan operation in West Virginia, would result in a decrease in our revenues and profitability, which could be material. Other factors affecting the production and sale of our coal that could result in decreases in our profitability include:

- . expiration or termination of, or sales price redeterminations or suspension of deliveries under, coal supply agreements;
- . disruption or increases in the cost of transportation services;
- . changes in laws or regulations, including permitting requirements;
- . litigation;

S-4

- . the timing and amount of insurance recoveries;
- . work stoppages or other labor difficulties;
- . mine worker vacation schedules and related maintenance activities; and
- . changes in coal market and general economic conditions.

Any adverse impact on our operating results could cause our stock price to decline substantially, particularly if the results are below research analyst or investor expectations.

### USE OF PROCEEDS

We estimate that the net proceeds to us from this offering will be approximately \$266.3 million, or approximately \$306.3 million if the underwriters exercise their over-allotment option in full to purchase 1,275,000 additional shares, based on the public offering price of \$33.00 per share, and after deducting the underwriting discount and estimated offering expenses payable by us.

We currently intend to use a portion of the net proceeds of this offering to repay in full outstanding indebtedness under our amortizing term loan and the remainder to reduce indebtedness under our revolving credit facility. As of March 31, 2001, outstanding indebtedness under our revolving credit facility and amortizing term loan was \$281.7 million and \$88.0 million, respectively. The indebtedness to be reduced bears interest at variable rates based on a PNC Bank rate or LIBOR. The interest rates in effect as of March 31, 2001 were 6.71% and 7.90% on outstanding indebtedness under the revolving credit facility and amortizing term loan, respectively. The indebtedness under the revolving credit facility matures on May 31, 2003.

S-5

### UNDERWRITING

We intend to offer the shares through the underwriters. Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated is acting as representative of the underwriters named below. Subject to the terms and conditions described in an underwriting agreement between us and the underwriters, we have agreed to sell to the underwriters, and the underwriters severally have agreed to purchase

Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

from us, the number of shares listed opposite their names below.

Underwriter -----	Number of Shares -----
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated.....	5,100,000
Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.....	850,000
J.P. Morgan Securities Inc.....	850,000
Lehman Brothers Inc.....	850,000
Morgan Stanley & Co. Incorporated.....	850,000
	-----
Total.....	8,500,000 =====

The underwriters have agreed to purchase all of the shares sold under the underwriting agreement if any of these shares are purchased. If an underwriter defaults, the underwriting agreement provides that the purchase commitments of the nondefaulting underwriters may be increased or the underwriting agreement may be terminated.

We have agreed to indemnify the underwriters against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribute to payments the underwriters may be required to make in respect of those liabilities.

The underwriters are offering the shares, subject to prior sale, when, as and if issued to and accepted by them, subject to approval of legal matters by their counsel, including the validity of the shares, and other conditions contained in the underwriting agreement, such as the receipt by the underwriters of officers' certificates and legal opinions. The underwriters reserve the right to withdraw, cancel or modify offers to the public and to reject orders in whole or in part.

Commissions and Discounts

The representative has advised us that the underwriters propose initially to offer the shares to the public at the public offering price on the cover page of this prospectus supplement and to dealers at that price less a concession not in excess of \$1.00 per share. The underwriters may allow, and the dealers may reallow, a discount not in excess of \$.10 per share to other dealers. After the public offering, the public offering price, concession and discount may be changed.

The following table shows the public offering price, underwriting discount and proceeds before expenses to us. The information assumes either no exercise or full exercise by the underwriters of their over-allotment option.

	Per Share	Without Option	With Option
	-----	-----	-----
Public offering price...	\$33.00	\$280,500,000	\$322,575,000
Underwriting discount...	\$1.62	\$13,770,000	\$15,835,500
Proceeds, before expenses, to Arch Coal.....	\$31.38	\$266,730,000	\$306,739,500

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

The expenses of the offering, not including the underwriting discount, are estimated at \$400,000 and are payable by us.

S-6

### Over-allotment Option

We have granted an option to the underwriters to purchase up to 1,275,000 additional shares at the public offering price less the underwriting discount. The underwriters may exercise this option for 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement solely to cover any over-allotments. If the underwriters exercise this option, each will be obligated, subject to conditions contained in the underwriting agreement, to purchase a number of additional shares proportionate to that underwriter's initial amount reflected in the above table.

### No Sales of Similar Securities

We, our directors and certain of our executive officers have agreed, with exceptions, not to sell or transfer any common stock for 90 days after the date of this prospectus supplement without first obtaining the written consent of Merrill Lynch. Specifically, we and these other individuals have agreed not to directly or indirectly:

- . offer, pledge, sell or contract to sell any common stock;
- . sell any option or contract to purchase any common stock;
- . purchase any option or contract to sell any common stock;
- . grant any option, right or warrant for the sale of any common stock;
- . lend or otherwise dispose of or transfer any common stock;
- . request or demand that we file a registration statement related to the common stock; or
- . enter into any swap or other agreement that transfers, in whole or in part, the economic consequence of ownership of any common stock whether any such swap or transaction is to be settled by delivery of shares or other securities, in cash or otherwise.

This lockup provision applies to common stock and to securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for or repayable with common stock. It also applies to common stock owned now or acquired later by the person executing the agreement or for which the person executing the agreement later acquires the power of disposition. Merrill Lynch, in its sole discretion, may release any of the securities subject to lockup at any time prior to the expiration of the lockup period without notice. Merrill Lynch has no present intent or arrangement to release any of the securities subject to this lockup agreement.

We are not restricted by this lockup provision from the sale or distribution of our common stock under our stock-based compensation plans and our dividend reinvestment plan.

We are party to a registration rights agreement with a number of our current and former stockholders that contains a lockup provision applicable to these stockholders when we sell shares of common stock. We have waived that

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

provision with respect to these stockholders in connection with this offering.

### New York Stock Exchange Listing

The shares are listed on the New York Stock Exchange and traded under the symbol "ACI."

### Price Stabilization and Short Positions

Until the distribution of the shares is completed, Securities and Exchange Commission rules may limit underwriters and selling group members from bidding for and purchasing our common stock. However, the representative may engage in transactions that stabilize the price of the common stock, such as bids or purchases to peg, fix or maintain that price.

S-7

In connection with the offering, the underwriters may make short sales of the common stock. Short sales involve the sale by the underwriters at the time of the offering of a greater number of shares than they are required to purchase in the offering. Covered short sales are sales made in an amount not greater than the over-allotment option. The underwriters may close out any covered short position by either exercising the over-allotment option or purchasing shares in the open market. In determining the source of shares to close out the covered short position, the underwriters will consider, among other things, the price of shares available for purchase in the open market as compared to the public offering price at which they may purchase the shares through the over-allotment option. Naked short sales are sales in excess of the over-allotment option. The underwriters must close out any naked short position by purchasing shares in the open market. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriters are concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of the shares in the open market after pricing that could adversely affect investors who purchase in the offering. Purchases of the common stock to stabilize its price or to reduce a short position may cause the price of the common stock to be higher than it might be in the absence of such purchases.

Neither we nor the underwriters make any representation or prediction as to the direction or magnitude of any effect that the transactions described above may have on the price of the common stock. In addition, neither we nor the underwriters make any representation that the underwriters will engage in these transactions or that these transactions, once commenced, will not be discontinued without notice.

### LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the shares of common stock offered hereby will be passed upon for us by Robert G. Jones, our Vice President--Law, General Counsel and Secretary. Certain legal matters with respect to the offering will be passed upon for us by Kirkpatrick & Lockhart LLP, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The underwriters have been represented by Cravath, Swaine & Moore, New York, New York.

S-8

### PROSPECTUS

\$750,000,000

Arch Coal, Inc.



## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

Debt Securities

Preferred Stock

Depository Shares

Common Stock

Warrants

-----

We will provide specific terms of these securities in supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and any supplement carefully before you invest.

See "Risk Factors" and other information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement for a discussion of factors you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in our securities.

We may use this prospectus to offer up to \$750,000,000 of securities.

Arch Coal common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "ACI".

This prospectus may not be used to consummate sales of securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

-----

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 April 19, 2001.

### SUMMARY

Arch Coal, Inc.

We are one of the largest coal producers in the United States. We mine, process and market compliance and low-sulfur coal from mines located in both the eastern and western United States, enabling us to ship coal cost-effectively to most of the major domestic coal-fired electric generation facilities. As of December 31, 2000, we had 28 operating mines and controlled approximately 3.37 billion tons of proven and probable coal reserves, of which approximately 1.90 billion tons were assigned reserves and 1.47 billion tons were unassigned reserves. We sell substantially all of our coal to producers of electric power.

Our principal executive office is located at CityPlace One, Suite 300, St. Louis, Missouri 63141, and our telephone number is (314) 994-2700.

### About This Prospectus

This prospectus is part of a registration statement (No. 333-58738) that

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

we filed with the SEC utilizing a "shelf" registration process. Under this shelf process, we may offer from time to time up to \$750 million of any of the securities described in this prospectus. In addition, under this shelf process, one or more selling stockholders may sell our common stock in one or more offerings, which would reduce the aggregate dollar amount of securities that we may offer. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we or such selling stockholders may offer. Each time we offer securities, we will provide you with a prospectus supplement that will describe the specific amounts, prices and terms of the securities being offered. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus.

We may use this prospectus to offer the following securities:

- . Debt securities;
- . Preferred stock;
- . Depositary shares;
- . Common stock; and
- . Warrants.

To understand the terms of our securities, you should carefully read this document with the attached prospectus supplement which together give the specific terms of the securities we are offering. You should also read the documents we have referred to you in "Where You Can Find More Information About Arch Coal" below for information about our company, including our financial statements.

### Where You Can Find More Information About Arch Coal

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file at the SEC's public reference rooms in Washington, D.C., New York, New York and Chicago, Illinois. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference rooms. Our SEC filings are also available to the public at the SEC's web site at <http://www.sec.gov>.

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" into this prospectus the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus, and later information filed with the SEC will update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference the documents listed

1

below and any future filings made with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14, or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 until we sell all of the securities:

- (a) Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2000;
- (b) Current Report on Form 8-K dated March 28, 2001;
- (c) The description of our common stock, par value \$.01 per share, set forth in the registration statement on Form 8-B dated June 17, 1997; and

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

(d) The description of our preferred stock purchase rights set forth in the registration statement on Form 8-A dated March 9, 2000.

You may request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by writing to or telephoning us at the following address:

External Affairs  
Arch Coal, Inc.  
City Place One, Suite 300  
St. Louis, MO 63141  
telephone: (314) 994-2700  
facsimile: (314) 994-2878

You should rely only on the information incorporated by reference or provided in this prospectus or the prospectus supplement. We have authorized no one 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 in this prospectus or the prospectus supplement is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of the document.

2

### RISK FACTORS

Investing in our securities will be subject to risks, including risks inherent in our business. The value of your investment may increase or decline and could result in a loss. You should carefully consider the following factors as well as other information contained and incorporated by reference in this prospectus, together with any added, updated or changed information included in the prospectus supplement, before deciding to invest in our securities.

We have a substantial amount of debt relative to our equity capitalization, which limits our flexibility and imposes restrictions on us, and a downturn in economic or industry conditions may materially affect our ability to meet our future debt service and liquidity needs.

We will have significant debt service obligations, and the terms of our credit agreements limit our flexibility and impose a number of restrictions upon us. We have significant lease and royalty obligations. We are required to make aggregate principal payments on our indebtedness of \$33.6 million in 2001, \$60.5 million in 2002, \$1.1 billion in 2003, \$0.6 million in each of 2004 and 2005 and \$2.9 million, in the aggregate, thereafter. Our ability to satisfy our debt service and lease and royalty obligations, and our ability to effect any refinancing of our indebtedness, will depend upon our future operating performance, which will be affected by prevailing economic conditions in the markets that we serve and financial, business and other factors, many of which are beyond our control. We may be unable to generate sufficient cash flow from operations and future borrowings or other financing may be unavailable in an amount sufficient to enable us to fund our debt service, lease and royalty payment obligations or our other liquidity needs.

Our relative amount of debt and the terms of our credit agreements could have material consequences to our business, including, but not limited to:

- . making it more difficult for us to satisfy our debt covenants and debt service, lease payment and other obligations;
- . making it more difficult for us to pay quarterly dividends as we have in the past;

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

- . increasing our vulnerability to general adverse economic and industry conditions;
- . limiting our ability to obtain additional financing to fund future acquisitions, working capital, capital expenditures or other general corporate requirements;
- . reducing the availability of cash flow from operations to fund acquisitions, working capital, capital expenditures or other general corporate purposes;
- . limiting our flexibility in planning for, or reacting to, changes in our business and the industry in which we compete; and
- . placing us at a competitive disadvantage when compared to competitors with less relative amounts of debt.

A significant portion of our debt bears interest at variable rates that are linked to short-term interest rates. If interest rates rise, our costs relative to those obligations would also rise.

We have experienced operating and net losses, which may continue or reoccur in the future.

Because the coal mining industry is subject to significant regulatory oversight, and due to the continuing possibility of adverse pricing trends or other industry trends beyond our control, we may suffer losses in the future if legal and regulatory rulings, mine idlings and closures, adverse pricing trends or other factors continue to affect our ability to mine and sell coal profitably.

3

We may be unable to comply with restrictions imposed by our credit facilities and other debt agreements, which could result in a default under these agreements, enabling lenders to declare amounts borrowed due and payable or otherwise result in unanticipated costs.

The agreements governing our outstanding debt impose a number of restrictions on us. For example, the terms of our credit facilities and leases contain financial and other covenants that create limitations on our ability to, among other things, effect acquisitions or dispositions and borrow additional funds, and require us to, among other things, maintain various financial ratios and comply with various other financial covenants. Our ability to comply with these restrictions may be affected by events beyond our control and, as a result, we may be unable to comply with these restrictions. A failure to comply with these restrictions could result in an event of default under these agreements. In the event of a default, our lenders could terminate their commitments to us and declare all amounts borrowed, together with accrued interest and fees, immediately due and payable. If this were to occur, we might not be able to pay these amounts, or we might be forced to seek an amendment to our debt agreements which could make the terms of these agreements more onerous for us.

An adverse decision in pending litigation could result in the permanent closure of all or a portion of our mining operations in West Virginia, which would cause our profitability to materially decline and could cause our stock price to decline.

As a result of litigation, a federal district court injunction

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

prohibiting the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection from issuing permits for our Dal-Tex mine to use valley fill mining techniques resulted in the shutdown of this mine in July 1999. A subsequent order prohibits the construction or expansion of a valley fills in West Virginia. Valley fill or mountaintop mining techniques used in Central Appalachia involve the creation of large, engineered works into which excess earth and rock extracted during surface mining are placed. The plaintiffs in the litigation alleged, among other things, that the issuance of mining permits without the preparation of an environmental impact statement, or EIS, that would evaluate the environmental effects of mountaintop mining and the construction of valley fills violated environmental laws. We have appealed the order specific to our Dal-Tex operations, and we, the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection and others have appealed the broader order concerning valley fills. Because it is not financially viable for coal producers to operate some mining properties without valley fills, if the appeals court agrees with the district court, we and other coal producers in West Virginia may be forced to close all or a portion of our mining operations in West Virginia, to the extent that those operations are dependent on the use of valley fills. If we permanently close these operations in West Virginia, our profitability will decline because we will record various charges in connection with the closures. We will also experience a loss of revenue from these operations. If the district court decision is overturned, then a settlement agreement entered into between the parties will require the preparation of an EIS prior to the issuance of permits for the construction of valley fills. The preparation of these statements is time-consuming and is sometimes the subject of litigation. As a result, even if the district court decision is overturned, we do not expect to re-open our Dal-Tex mining operation for several months at the earliest, subject to then-existing market conditions.

New environmental regulations governing coal-fired electric generating plants could reduce the demand for coal as a fuel source and affect the volume of our sales.

Several new environmental regulations require a reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions generated by coal-fired electric generating plants. Substantially all of our revenues from sales of coal in the year ended December 31, 2000 were from sales to generators operating these types of plants. Enforcement actions against a number of these generators, which include some of our customers, and proposed legislation ultimately may require additional reductions in nitrogen oxide emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency is also considering regulations that would require reductions in mercury emissions from coal-fired electric generating plants. To comply with these regulations and enforcement actions, these generators may choose to switch to other fuels that generate less of these emissions, such as natural gas or oil.

4

Because our industry is highly regulated, our ability to conduct mining operations is restricted and our profitability may decline.

Federal, state and local governmental authorities regulate the coal mining industry on matters as diverse as employee health and safety, air quality standards, water pollution, groundwater quality and availability, plant and wildlife protection, the reclamation and restoration of mining properties, the discharge of materials into the environment and surface subsidence from underground mining. In addition, federal legislation mandates benefits for various retired coal miners represented by the United Mine Workers of America. These regulations and legislation have had, and will continue to have, a significant effect on our costs of production and competitive position. Further regulations, legislation or orders may also cause our sales or profitability to decline by hindering our ability to continue our mining operations, by

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

increasing our costs or by causing coal to become a less attractive fuel source.

Mining companies must obtain numerous permits that strictly regulate environmental and health and safety matters in connection with coal mining. Regulatory authorities exercise considerable discretion in the timing of permit issuance. Also, private individuals and the public at large possess rights to comment on and otherwise engage in the permit process, including through intervention in the courts. As described above, we shut down our Dal-Tex mining operation in West Virginia in July 1999 as a result of legal action preventing the issuance of permits necessary for those operations. Accordingly, the permits we need for our mining operations may not be issued, or if issued, may not be issued in a timely fashion, or may involve requirements that may be changed or interpreted in a manner which restricts our ability to conduct our mining operations or to do so profitably.

Our profitability may be adversely impacted by unanticipated mine operating conditions and other factors that are not within our control, which could cause our quarterly or annual results to decrease and our stock price to decline.

Our mining operations are inherently subject to changing conditions that can affect levels of production and production costs at particular mines for varying lengths of time and can result in decreases in our profitability. Weather conditions, equipment replacement or repair, fires, variations in thickness of the layer, or seam, of coal, amounts of overburden, rock and other natural materials and other geological conditions have had, and can be expected in the future to have, a significant impact on our operating results. In addition, a prolonged disruption of production at any of our principal mines, particularly our Mingo Logan operation in West Virginia, would result in a decrease, which could be material, in our revenues and profitability. Other factors affecting the production and sale of our coal that could result in decreases in our profitability include:

- . expiration or termination of, or sales price redeterminations or suspension of deliveries under, coal supply agreements;
- . disruption or increases in the cost of transportation services;
- . changes in laws or regulations, including permitting requirements;
- . litigation;
- . the timing and amount of insurance recoveries;
- . work stoppages or other labor difficulties;
- . mine worker vacation schedules and related maintenance activities; and
- . changes in coal market and general economic conditions.

Decreases in our profitability as a result of the factors described above could adversely impact our quarterly or annual results materially. Any adverse impact on our operating results could cause our stock price to decline substantially, particularly if the results are below research analyst or investor expectations.

Intense competition and excess industry capacity in the coal producing regions in which we operate has adversely affected our revenues and profitability and

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

may continue to do so in the future.

The coal industry is intensely competitive, primarily as a result of the existence of numerous producers in the coal producing regions in which we operate, and a number of our competitors have greater financial resources than we do. We compete with several major coal producers in the Central Appalachian and Powder River Basin areas. We also compete with a number of smaller producers in those and our other market regions. We are subject to the risk of reduced profitability as a result of excess industry capacity, which has occurred in the past, and which results in reduced prices for our coal.

The demand for and pricing of our coal is greatly influenced by consumption patterns of the domestic electric generation industry, and any reduction in the demand for our coal by this industry may cause our profitability to decline.

Demand for our coal and the prices that we will be able to obtain for our coal are closely linked to coal consumption patterns of the domestic electric generation industry, which has accounted for approximately 90% of domestic coal consumption in recent years. These coal consumption patterns are influenced by factors beyond our control, including the demand for electricity, which is significantly dependent upon summer and winter temperatures in the United States, government regulation, technological developments and the location, availability, quality and price of competing sources of coal, alternative fuels such as natural gas, oil, and nuclear, and alternative energy sources such as hydroelectric power. Demand for our low-sulfur coal and the prices that we will be able to obtain for it will also be affected by the price and availability of high-sulfur coal, which can be marketed in tandem with emissions allowances in order to meet federal Clean Air Act requirements. Any reduction in the demand for our coal by the domestic electric generation industry may cause our profitability to decline.

Deregulation of the electric utility industry may cause our customers to be more price-sensitive in purchasing coal, which could cause our profitability to decline.

Electric utility deregulation is expected to provide incentives to generators of electricity to minimize their fuel costs and is believed to have caused electric generators to be more aggressive in negotiating prices with coal suppliers. To the extent utility deregulation causes our customers to be more cost sensitive, deregulation may have a negative effect on our profitability.

Our profitability may be adversely affected by the renegotiation, termination or expiration of favorable long-term coal supply contracts.

We sell a substantial portion of our coal under long-term coal supply agreements, which are contracts with a term greater than 12 months. In 2000, sales of coal under long-term contracts accounted for approximately 78% of our total revenues. As a consequence, we may experience fluctuations in operating results due to the expiration or termination of, or sales price redeterminations or suspensions of deliveries under, these coal supply agreements. In addition, the increasingly short terms of sales contracts and the consequent absence of price adjustment provisions in such contracts make it more likely that we will not be able to recover inflation related increases in mining costs during the contract term through a later price adjustment. Some of these contracts include pricing which is above, and, in some cases, materially above, current market prices. We currently supply coal under long-term coal supply contracts with one customer which have price renegotiation or modification provisions that take effect in mid-2001. The prices for coal shipped under these contracts are materially above the current market price for similar type coal. For the year ended December 31, 2000, approximately \$18.4 million of our operating income related to these contracts. We expect income

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

from operations to be reduced by approximately one-half of the operating income attributable to these contracts in 2001, and by the full amount of this operating income in 2002. These amounts are predicated on current market pricing and will change with market conditions. Some price adjustment provisions permit a periodic decrease in the contract price to reflect decreases in production costs, including those related to

6

technological improvements, changes in specified indices or items such as taxes or royalties. Price renegotiation or modification provisions may provide for downward adjustments in the contract price based on market factors.

We have also renegotiated some contracts to change the contract term or accommodate adverse market conditions such as decreasing coal spot market prices. New nitrous oxide emission limits could also result in price adjustments, or could force electric generators to terminate or modify long-term contracts. Other short- and long-term contracts define base or optional tonnage requirements by reference to the customer's requirements, which may change as a result of factors beyond our, and in some instances, the customer's control, including utility deregulation. If the parties to any long-term contracts with us were to modify, suspend or terminate those contracts, our profitability would decline to the extent that we are unable to find alternative customers at a similar or higher level of profitability.

Because our profitability is substantially dependent on the availability of an adequate supply of coal reserves that can be mined at competitive costs, the unavailability of these types of reserves would cause our profitability to decline.

Our profitability depends substantially on our ability to mine coal reserves that have the geological characteristics that enable them to be mined at competitive costs. Replacements reserves may not be available when required or, if available, may not be capable of being mined at costs comparable to those characteristic of the depleting mines. We have in the past, and will in the future, acquire coal reserves for our mine portfolio from third parties. We may not be able to accurately assess the geological characteristics of any reserves that we acquire, which may adversely affect our profitability and financial condition. Exhaustion of reserves at particular mines also may have an adverse effect on our operating results that is disproportionate to the percentage of overall production represented by such mines.

Disruption in or increased costs of transportation services could adversely affect our profitability.

The coal industry depends on rail, trucking and barge transportation to deliver shipments of coal to customers, and transportation costs are a significant component of the total cost of supplying coal. Disruptions of these transportation services could temporarily impair our ability to supply coal to our customers and thus adversely affect our business and the results of our operations. In addition, increases in transportation costs, or changes in costs relative to transportation costs for coal produced by our competitors or of other fuels, could adversely affect our profitability.

We face numerous uncertainties in estimating our economically recoverable coal reserves, and inaccuracies in our estimates could result in lower than expected revenues, higher than expected costs and decreased profitability.

The coal reserve information included or incorporated in this prospectus has not been audited by an independent expert. We base our reserve information on geological data assembled and analyzed by our staff which includes various



## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

engineers and geologists, and outside firms. The reserve estimates are annually updated to reflect production of coal from the reserves and new drilling or other data received. There are numerous uncertainties inherent in estimating quantities of recoverable reserves, including many factors beyond our control. Estimates of economically recoverable coal reserves and net cash flows necessarily depend upon a number of variable factors and assumptions, such as geological and mining conditions, which may not be fully identified by available exploration data or may differ from experience in current operations, historical production from the area compared with production from other producing areas, the assumed effects of regulation by governmental agencies and assumptions concerning coal prices, operating costs, severance and excise tax, development costs and reclamation costs, all of which may vary considerably from actual results.

For these reasons, estimates of the economically recoverable quantities attributable to any particular group of properties, classifications of reserves based on risk of recovery and estimates of net cash flows expected therefrom prepared by different engineers or by the same engineers at different times may vary substantially. Actual coal tonnage recovered from identified reserve areas or properties, and revenues and

7

expenditures with respect to our reserves, may vary from estimates, and these variances may be material. These estimates thus may not accurately reflect our actual reserves.

Defects in title or loss of any leasehold interests in our properties could limit our ability to mine these properties or result in significant unanticipated costs.

We conduct a significant part of our mining operations on properties that we lease. The loss of any lease could adversely affect our ability to mine the associated reserves. Because title to most of our leased properties and mineral rights is not usually verified until we make a commitment to develop a property, which may not occur until after we have obtained necessary permits and completed exploration of the property, our right to mine some of our reserves has in the past, and may again in the future, be adversely affected if defects in title or boundaries exist. In order to obtain leases or mining contracts to conduct our mining operations on property where these defects exist, we have had to, and may in the future have to, incur unanticipated costs. In addition, we may not be able to successfully negotiate new leases or mining contracts for properties containing additional reserves or maintain our leasehold interests in properties where we have not commenced mining operations during the term of the lease.

Agreements entered into in connection with the acquisition of our reserves and mining facilities in the western United States contain limitations on our ability to manage these operations exclusively and could subject us to significant indemnification obligations.

Our affiliate, Arch Western Resources, LLC, is the owner of reserves and mining facilities in the western United States. The agreement under which Arch Western was formed provides that one of our subsidiaries, as the managing member of Arch Western, generally has exclusive power and authority to conduct, manage and control the business of Arch Western. However, consent of ARCO, the other member of Arch Western, would generally be required in the event that Arch Western proposes to make a distribution, incur indebtedness, sell properties or merge or consolidate with any other entity if, at that time, Arch Western has a debt rating less favorable than specified ratings from Moody's Investors Service or from Standard & Poor's or fails to meet specified

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

indebtedness and interest ratios.

In connection with the Arch Western acquisition, we entered into an agreement under which we agreed to indemnify ARCO against specified tax liabilities in the event that these liabilities arise as a result of actions taken prior to June 1, 2013, including the sale or other disposition of specified properties of Arch Western, the repurchase of some equity interests in Arch Western by Arch Western or the reduction under some circumstances of indebtedness incurred by Arch Western in connection with the Arch Western acquisition. Depending on the time at which any indemnification obligation were to arise, it could impact our profitability for the period in which it arises.

The membership interests in Canyon Fuel Company, LLC, which operates three coal mines in Utah, are owned 65% by Arch Western and 35% by a subsidiary of ITOCHU Corporation of Japan. The agreement which governs the management and operations of Canyon Fuel provides for a management board to manage the business and affairs of Canyon Fuel. Some major business decisions concerning Canyon Fuel require the vote of 70% of the membership interests and therefore limit our ability to make these decisions. These decisions include admission of additional members; approval of annual business plans; the making of significant capital expenditures; sales of coal below specified prices; agreements between Canyon Fuel and any member; institution or settlement of litigation; a material change in the nature of Canyon Fuel's business or a material acquisition; the sale or other disposition, including by merger, of assets other than in the ordinary course of business; incurrence of indebtedness; entering into leases; and the selection and removal of officers. The Canyon Fuel agreement also contains restrictions on the transfer of our membership interest in Canyon Fuel.

Our stockholder rights plan and amended charter documents may make it harder for others to obtain control of us even though some stockholders might consider such a development favorable, which may adversely affect our stock price.

8

Our stockholder rights plan and provisions of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and our by-laws, may delay, inhibit or prevent someone from gaining control of us through a tender offer, business combination, proxy contest or some other method even if some of our stockholders might believe a change in control is desirable. See "Description of Capital Securities" for a description of our rights plan and these charter and by-law provisions.

### FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus, including the information incorporated by reference herein, information included in or incorporated by reference from future filings by us with the SEC, as well as information contained in written material, press releases and oral statements issued by us or on our behalf, contains, or may contain, certain statements that may be deemed to be "forward-looking statements" under applicable provisions of the federal securities laws. Such "forward-looking statements" include information relating to, among other matters, our future prospects, developments and business strategies for our operations. These forward-looking statements are identified by their use of terms and phrases such as "estimate", "expect", "anticipate", "intend", "believe", and similar terms and phrases. These statements are based on certain assumptions and analyses made by us in light of our experience and perception of historical trends, current conditions, expected future developments and other factors that we believe are appropriate under the circumstances, and involve risks and uncertainties that may cause actual future activities and results of operations to be materially different from those suggested or

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

described in this prospectus or in such other documents. These risks include, but are not limited to, the risks described in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2000 filed with the SEC on March 16, 2001, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus, and any risks that may be described from time to time in our filings with the SEC or in any prospectus supplement relating to specific offerings of securities.

### RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

The following table sets forth the ratios of earnings to fixed charges for Arch Coal:

	Year Ended December 31,				
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
	----	----	----	----	----
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges.....	3.76	3.04	2.29	*	1.77

-----  
 \* Fixed charges exceeded earnings (as defined below) by \$327.0 million.

The above ratios are computed on a total enterprise basis including our consolidated subsidiaries, plus our share of significant affiliates accounted for on the equity method that are 50% or greater owned or whose indebtedness has been directly or indirectly guaranteed by us. Earnings consist of income (loss) from continuing operations before income taxes and are adjusted to include fixed charges (excluding capitalized interest). Fixed charges consist of interest incurred on indebtedness, the portion of operating lease rentals deemed representative of the interest factor and the amortization of debt expense.

In 1999, our losses were primarily attributable to a write-down of the carrying value of some of our operating assets and coal reserves.

### USE OF PROCEEDS

We will use the net proceeds we receive from the sale of the securities offered by this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement for general corporate purposes, unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement. General corporate purposes may include additions to working capital, capital expenditures, stock redemption, repayment of debt or the financing of possible acquisitions. Pending these uses, we expect to invest the net proceeds in short-term, interest-bearing securities. We will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of common stock by any selling stockholder.

### DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description sets forth the general terms and provisions that could apply to the debt securities. Each prospectus supplement will state the particular terms that actually will apply to the debt securities offered by the supplement.

The debt securities will be either senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities. Unless the applicable prospectus supplement states otherwise,

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

senior securities will be issued under an indenture between us and The Bank of New York Company, Inc., as trustee. Subordinated securities will be issued under a separate indenture between us and a commercial bank to be selected as trustee. The senior indenture and the subordinated indenture are together called the "indentures".

The following summary of selected provisions of the indentures is not complete. You should refer to the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture, copies of which will be incorporated by reference into this prospectus, for more detailed information.

### General

Neither indenture will limit the aggregate principal amount of debt securities that we may issue under that indenture. The debt securities may be issued in one or more series as we may authorize at various times. All debt securities will be unsecured. The senior securities will have the same rank as all of our other unsecured and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated securities will be subordinated to superior indebtedness as described in the "Subordinated Securities" section below. The senior securities and subordinated securities may be combined into one series or offered separately. The prospectus supplement relating to the particular series of debt securities being offered will specify the amounts, prices and terms of those debt securities. These terms may include:

- . the title and any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities;
- . the price (expressed as a percentage of the total principal amount) at which such debt securities will be issued;
- . the date or dates on which the debt securities will mature or the method by which such dates can be determined;
- . if the debt securities will bear interest, the annual interest rate or rates (which may be fixed or variable), or the method of determining the interest rate or rates; the date or dates from which any interest will accrue, the interest payment dates on which any interest will be payable, the record dates for those interest payment dates and the basis upon which interest shall be calculated if other than that of a 360 day year of twelve 30-day months;
- . the currency or currencies or units of two or more currencies in which the debt securities are denominated and principal and interest may be payable, and for which the debt securities may be purchased, which may be in United States dollars, a foreign currency or currencies or units of two or more foreign currencies;
- . whether such debt securities are to be senior securities or subordinated securities;
- . any redemption or sinking fund terms;
- . any events of default or covenants with respect to the debt securities of a particular series, if not set forth in this prospectus;
- . whether the debt securities will be issued as registered securities or as bearer securities and, if in registered form, the denominations of the debt securities if other than \$1,000 and multiples of \$1,000;

- . whether the debt securities are to be issued in whole or in part in the form of one or more global securities and the depositary for the global security or securities;
- . the date or dates on which the principal of and any premium on the debt securities will be payable or the method for determining the date or dates;
- . the place or places where payments on the debt securities will be made and the debt securities may be surrendered for registration of transfer or exchange;
- . whether the debt securities will be issued in certificated or book-entry form;
- . the applicability of the defeasance and covenant defeasance provisions of the applicable indenture;
- . whether the debt securities will be convertible into shares of common stock and/or exchangeable for other securities and, if so, the terms and conditions upon which the debt securities will be so convertible or exchangeable; and
- . any other terms of the series, which will not conflict with the terms of applicable indenture.

Principal, any premium and any interest will be payable and the debt securities will be transferable at the corporate trust office of the appropriate trustee, unless we specify otherwise in the accompanying prospectus supplement. At our option, however, payment of interest may be made by check mailed to the registered holders of the debt securities at their registered addresses.

We will issue the debt securities in fully registered form without coupons unless the applicable prospectus supplement provides for an issuance to be in bearer form with or without coupons. Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will issue debt securities denominated in U.S. dollars in denominations of \$1,000 or multiples of \$1,000 for registered securities and in denominations of \$5,000 or multiples of \$5,000 for bearer securities. No service charge will be made for any transfer or exchange of debt securities, but we may require payment beforehand of any related taxes or other governmental charges. Debt securities may also be issued pursuant to the indentures in transactions exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act of 1933. Those debt securities will not be considered in determining the aggregate amount of securities issued under the registration statement.

We will describe special Federal income tax and other considerations relating to debt securities denominated in foreign currencies or units of two or more foreign currencies in the applicable prospectus supplement.

#### Exchange, Registration and Transfer

Registered securities of any series that are not global securities will be exchangeable for other registered securities of the same series and of like aggregate principal amount, tenor and terms, in different authorized denominations. In addition, if debt securities of any series are issuable as both registered securities and bearer securities, the holder may choose, upon written request, and subject to the terms of the applicable indenture, to

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

exchange bearer securities and the appropriate related coupons of that series into registered securities of the same series of any authorized denominations and of like aggregate principal amount, tenor and terms. Bearer securities with attached coupons surrendered in exchange for registered securities between a regular record date or a special record date and the relevant date for interest payment shall be surrendered without the coupon relating to the interest payment date. Interest will not be payable with respect to the registered security issued in exchange for that bearer security. That interest will be payable only to the holder of the coupon when due in accordance with the terms of the applicable indenture. Bearer securities will not be issued in exchange for registered securities.

11

You may present debt securities for exchange as provided above. In addition, you may present registered securities for registration of transfer, together with a duly executed form of transfer, at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent designated by us for that purpose with respect to any series of debt securities and referred to in the applicable prospectus supplement. This may be done without service charge and upon payment of any taxes and other governmental charges as described in the applicable indenture. The security registrar or the transfer agent will effect the transfer or exchange upon being satisfied with the documents of title and identity of the person making the request. We have appointed the applicable trustee as security registrar for the applicable indenture. If a prospectus supplement refers to any transfer agents (in addition to the security registrar) initially designated by us with respect to any series of debt securities, we may at any time rescind the designation of any such transfer agent or approve a change in the location through which such transfer agent acts. However, if debt securities of a series are issuable solely as registered securities, we will be required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for such series, and if debt securities of a series are issuable as bearer securities, we will be required to maintain (in addition to the security registrar) a transfer agent in a place of payment for such series located in Europe. We may at any time designate additional transfer agents with respect to any series of debt securities.

In the event of any redemption in part, we will not be required to:

- . issue, register the transfer of or exchange debt securities of any series during a period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before any selection of debt securities of that series to be redeemed and ending at the close of business on:
  - if debt securities of the series are issuable only as registered securities, the day of mailing of the relevant notice of redemption;
  - if debt securities of the series are issuable only as bearer securities, the day of the first publication of the relevant notice of redemption; or
  - if debt securities of the series are issuable as registered securities and bearer securities and there is no publication of the relevant notice of redemption, the day of mailing of the relevant notice of redemption, or the date of such publication, if applicable;
- . register the transfer of or exchange any registered security, or portion thereof, called for redemption, except the unredeemed portion

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

of any registered security being redeemed in part; or

- . exchange any bearer security called for redemption, except to exchange such bearer security for a registered security of that series and like tenor and terms which is immediately surrendered for redemption.

For a discussion of restrictions on the exchange, registration and transfer of global securities, see "Global Securities" below.

### Payment and Paying Agents

Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, payment of principal, any premium and any interest on registered securities will be made at the office of the paying agent or paying agents that we designate at various times. However, at our option, we may make interest payments by check mailed to the address, as it appears in the security register, of the person entitled to the payments. Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make payment of any installment of interest on registered securities to the person in whose name that registered security is registered at the close of business on the regular record date for such interest.

Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, payment of principal, any premium and interest on bearer securities will be payable, in accordance with any applicable laws and regulations, at the offices of those paying agents outside the U.S. that we may designate at various times. We

12

will make interest payments on bearer securities and the attached coupons on any interest payment date only against surrender of the coupon relating to that interest payment date. No payment with respect to any bearer security will be made at any of our offices or agencies in the U.S., by check mailed to any U.S. address or by transfer to an account maintained with a bank located in the U.S. However, if (but only if) payment in U.S. dollars of the full amount of principal, any premium and interest on bearer securities denominated and payable in U.S. dollars at all offices or agencies outside the U.S. is illegal or effectively precluded by exchange controls or other similar restrictions, then those payments will be made at the office of our paying agent in the Borough of Manhattan, The City of New York.

Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the Corporate Trust Office of the trustee in the Borough of Manhattan, The City of New York, will be designated:

- . as our sole paying agent for payments with respect to debt securities that are issuable solely as registered securities; and
- . as our paying agent in the Borough of Manhattan, The City of New York, for payments with respect to debt securities (subject to the limitation described above in the case of bearer securities) that are issuable solely as bearer securities or as both registered securities and bearer securities. We will name any paying agents outside the U.S. and any other paying agents in the U.S. initially designated by us for the debt securities in the applicable prospectus supplement. We may at any time designate additional paying agents or rescind the designation of any paying agent or approve a change in the office through which any paying agent acts. However, if debt securities of a series are issuable solely as registered securities, we will be

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

required to maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for that series. If debt securities of a series are issuable as bearer securities, we will be required to maintain:

- . a paying agent in the Borough of Manhattan, The City of New York, (a) for payments with respect to any registered securities of the series and (b) for payments with respect to bearer securities of the series in the circumstance described above, but not otherwise; and
- . a paying agent in a place of payment located outside the U.S. where debt securities of that series and any attached coupons may be presented and surrendered for payment. However, if the debt securities of that series are listed on the London Stock Exchange, the Luxembourg Stock Exchange or any other stock exchange located outside the U.S. and if the stock exchange requires it, we will maintain a paying agent in London or Luxembourg or any other required city located outside the U.S. for those debt securities.

All moneys we pay to a paying agent for the payment of principal, any premium or interest on any debt security or coupon that remains unclaimed at the end of two years after becoming due and payable will be repaid to us. After that time, the holder of the debt security or coupon will look only to us for payments out of those repaid amounts.

### Global Securities

The debt securities of a series may be issued in whole or in part in the form of one or more global certificates that we will deposit with a depository identified in the applicable prospectus supplement. Global securities may be issued in either registered or bearer form and in either temporary or permanent form. Unless and until it is exchanged in whole or in part for the individual debt securities it represents, a global security may not be transferred except as a whole:

- . by the applicable depository to a nominee of the depository;
- . by any nominee to the depository itself or another nominee; or
- . by the depository or any nominee to a successor depository or any nominee of the successor.

13

We will describe the specific terms of the depository arrangement with respect to a series of debt securities in the applicable prospectus supplement. We anticipate that the following provisions will generally apply to depository arrangements.

When we issue a global security in registered form, the depository for the global security or its nominee will credit, on its book-entry registration and transfer system, the respective principal amounts of the individual debt securities represented by that global security to the accounts of persons that have accounts with the depository ("participants"). Those accounts will be designated by the dealers, underwriters or agents with respect to the underlying debt securities or by us if those debt securities are offered and sold directly by us. Ownership of beneficial interests in a global security will be limited to participants or persons that may hold interests through participants. For interests of participants, ownership of beneficial interests



## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

in the global security will be shown on records maintained by the applicable depositary or its nominee. For interests of persons other than participants, that ownership information will be shown on the records of participants. Transfer of that ownership will be effected only through those records. The laws of some states require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of securities in definitive form. These limits and laws may impair our ability to transfer beneficial interests in a global security.

As long as the depositary for a global security, or its nominee, is the registered owner of that global security, the depositary or nominee will be considered the sole owner or holder of the debt securities represented by the global security for all purposes under the applicable indenture. Except as provided below, owners of beneficial interests in a global security:

- . will not be entitled to have any of the underlying debt securities registered in their names;
- . will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of any of the underlying debt securities in definitive form; and
- . will not be considered the owners or holders under the indenture relating to those debt securities.

Payments of principal of, any premium and any interest on individual debt securities represented by a global security registered in the name of a depositary or its nominee will be made to the depositary or its nominee as the registered owner of the global security representing such debt securities. None of the trustee for the debt securities, any paying agent, the registrar for the debt securities, nor us will be responsible for any aspect of the records relating to, or payments made by, the depositary or any participants on account of beneficial interests of the global security.

We expect the depositary or its nominee, upon receipt of any payment of principal, any premium or interest relating to a permanent global security representing any series of debt securities, immediately will credit participants' accounts with the payments. Those payments will be credited in amounts proportional to the respective beneficial interests of the participants in the principal amount of the global security as shown on the records of the depositary or its nominee. We also expect that payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in the global security held through those participants will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices. This is not the case with securities held for the accounts of customers in bearer form or registered in "street name." Those payments will be the sole responsibility of those participants.

If the depositary for a series of debt securities is at any time unwilling, unable or ineligible to continue as depositary and we do not appoint a successor depositary within 90 days, we will issue individual debt securities of that series in exchange for the global security or securities representing that series. In addition, we may at any time in our sole discretion determine not to have any debt securities of a series represented by one or more global securities. In that event, we will issue individual debt securities of that series in exchange for the global security or securities. Further, if we specify, an owner of a beneficial interest in a global security may, on terms acceptable to the trustee, the applicable depositary and us, receive individual debt securities of that series in exchange for those beneficial interests. The foregoing is subject to any limitations described in the applicable prospectus supplement. In any such instance, the owner of the beneficial interest will be entitled to

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

physical delivery of individual debt securities equal in principal amount to the beneficial interest and to have the debt securities registered in its name. Those individual debt securities will be issued in denominations, unless we specify otherwise, of \$1,000 or integral multiples of \$1,000.

If we specify in an applicable prospectus supplement, all or any portion of the debt securities of a series that are issuable as bearer securities initially will be represented by one or more temporary global securities, with or without interest coupons. These temporary global securities will be deposited with a common depository in London for Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York, Brussels Office, as operator of the Euroclear System and Clearstream Banking (formerly known as Cedel Bank) for credit to the respective accounts of the beneficial owners of those debt securities or to other accounts as they may direct. On and after the exchange date determined as provided in the temporary global security and described in the applicable prospectus supplement, each temporary global security will be exchangeable for definitive debt securities in bearer form, registered form, or definitive global form or any combination of these. No bearer security, including one in definitive global bearer form delivered in exchange for a portion of a temporary global security will be mailed or otherwise delivered to any location in the U.S. in connection with this exchange.

Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we or our agent must receive a certificate signed by Euroclear or Clearstream prior to the delivery of a definitive bearer security. We must also receive this signed certificate prior to the actual payment of interest on the applicable portion of the temporary global security payable before delivery of a definitive debt security. The certificate must be based on statements provided to Euroclear or Clearstream by its member organizations. The certificate must be dated on the earlier of the date of the first actual payment of interest on the debt security or the date of delivery of the debt security in definitive form, and must state that on that date the debt security is owned by:

- . a person that is not a U.S. person and is not a financial institution holding the obligation for purposes of resale during the restricted period;
- . a U.S. person that is either (a) the foreign branch of a U.S. financial institution purchasing for its own account or for resale during the restricted period or (b) a U.S. person who acquired its interest through the foreign branch of a U.S. financial institution and who holds the obligation through such financial institution on the date of certification. In either case, the U.S. financial institution must provide a certificate stating that it agrees to comply with the requirements and regulations of Section 165(j)(3)(A), (B) or (C) of the Internal Revenue Code unless it has provided a valid blanket certificate stating the same; or
- . a financial institution holding for purposes of resale during the restricted period. That financial institution must certify in addition that it has not acquired the obligation for purposes of resale directly or indirectly to a U.S. person or to a person within the United States or its possessions.

As used in this paragraph, the term "restricted period" means (a) the period from the closing date until 40 days thereafter or (b) any time if the obligation is held as part of an unsold allotment or subscription.

Each of Euroclear and Clearstream will in these circumstances credit the interest received by it to the accounts of the beneficial owners of the

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

temporary global security or to other accounts as they may direct.

The beneficial owner of a debt security underlying a definitive global security in bearer form may exchange its interest in that definitive global security for a definitive bearer security or securities, or a definitive registered security or securities of any authorized denomination. The beneficial owner must give at least 30 days' written notice of the exchange through either Euroclear or Clearstream. No individual definitive bearer security will be delivered in or to the U.S.

15

### Subordinated Securities

Payment of the principal, interest and any premium on subordinated securities will generally be subordinated in right of payment to the prior payment in full of all of our superior indebtedness.

"Superior indebtedness" will include the principal of, any premium and accrued and unpaid interest on the following items, whether outstanding on or created, incurred or assumed after the date of execution of the subordinated indenture:

- . purchase money and similar obligations;
- . our indebtedness for money borrowed (other than the subordinated securities);
- . guarantees by us of indebtedness for money borrowed of any other person;
- . indebtedness evidenced by notes, debentures, bonds or other instruments of indebtedness for the payment of which we are responsible or liable, by guarantees or otherwise;
- . our obligations under any agreement relating to any interest rate or currency swap, interest rate cap, interest rate collar, interest rate future, currency exchange or forward currency transaction or any similar interest rate or currency hedging transaction, whether outstanding on the date of the subordinated indenture or created, incurred or assumed afterward;
- . our obligations under any agreement to lease, or any lease of, any real or personal property which, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States, is classified on our balance sheet as a liability; and
- . interest or obligations in respect of indebtedness accruing after the commencement of any insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings.

Superior indebtedness will also include modifications, renewals, extensions and refundings of any of the types of indebtedness, liability, obligations or guarantees listed above, unless the relevant instrument provides that it is not superior in right of payment to the subordinated securities. Superior indebtedness will not, however, include (a) any of our obligations to any subsidiary of ours and (b) any of our indebtedness, guarantees or obligations of the type set forth above which is subordinate or junior in ranking in any respect to any of our other indebtedness, guarantees or obligations.

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

No payment by us on account of principal, any premium or interest on the subordinated securities, including any sinking fund payments may be made if:

- . any default or event of default with respect to any superior indebtedness occurs and is continuing and
- . unless the default or event of default is our failure to pay principal or interest on any instrument constituting superior indebtedness, written notice of this default or event of default is given to the trustee by us or to us and the trustee by the holders or their representatives of at least 10% in principal amount of any superior indebtedness.

We may resume payments on the subordinated securities (unless otherwise prohibited by the related indenture) if (a) the default is cured or waived, or (b) 180 days pass after the notice is given, if the default is not the subject of judicial proceedings, unless the default is our failure to pay principal or interest on any superior indebtedness.

In the event that any subordinated security is declared due and payable before its specified date, or upon any payment or distribution of assets by us to creditors upon our dissolution, winding up, liquidation or

16

reorganization, all principal of, any premium and any interest due or to become due on all superior indebtedness must be paid in full before the holders of subordinated securities are entitled to receive or take any payment. However, this does not apply to payments received by the holders of subordinated securities consisting of shares of stock or subordinated indebtedness provided by a plan of reorganization or adjustment which does not alter the rights of holders of superior indebtedness without any holder's consent. Subject to the payment in full of all superior indebtedness, the holders of the subordinated securities are to be subrogated to the rights of the holders of superior indebtedness to receive payments or distribution of our assets applicable to superior indebtedness until the subordinated securities are paid in full.

By reason of this subordination, in the event of insolvency, our creditors who are holders of superior indebtedness, as well as certain of our general creditors, may recover more, ratably, than the holders of the subordinated securities.

The subordinated indenture will not limit the amount of superior indebtedness or debt securities which may be issued by us or any of our subsidiaries.

### Modification of the Indentures

Our rights and obligations and the rights of the holders under each indenture may be modified with the consent of the holders of at least two-thirds in principal amount of the then outstanding debt securities of each series affected by the modification. None of the following modifications, however, will be effective against any holder without the consent of the holders of all of the affected outstanding debt securities:

- . changing the maturity, installment or interest rate of any of the debt securities;
- . reducing the principal amount, any premium or the rate of interest of any of the debt securities;

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

- . changing the currency, currencies or currency unit or units in which any principal, premium or interest of any of the debt securities is payable;
- . changing any of our obligations to maintain an office or agency in the places and for the purposes required by the indentures;
- . impairing any right to take legal action for an overdue payment;
- . reducing the percentage required for modifications or waivers of compliance with the indentures; or
- . with certain exceptions, modifying the provisions for the waiver of certain covenants and defaults and any of the foregoing provisions.

Any actions we or the trustee may take toward adding to our covenants, adding events of default or establishing the structure or terms of the debt securities as permitted by the indentures will not require the approval of any holder of debt securities. In addition, we or the trustee may cure ambiguities or inconsistencies in the indentures or make other provisions without the approval of any holder in certain limited circumstances.

### Waiver of Certain Covenants

We will not be required to comply with certain restrictive covenants contained in an indenture if the holders of at least two-thirds in principal amount of each series of outstanding debt securities affected waive compliance with the restrictive covenants.

17

### Events of Default, Notice and Waiver

"Event of default" when used in an indenture, will mean any of the following in relation to a series of debt securities:

- . failure to pay interest on any debt security for 30 days after the interest becomes due;
- . failure to pay the principal or any premium on any debt security for 5 days after such payment becomes due;
- . failure to deposit any sinking fund payment for 30 days after such payment becomes due;
- . failure to perform or breach of any other covenant or warranty in the indenture that continues for 60 days after our being given written notice from the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the series;
- . certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of ours;  
or
- . any other event of default provided for debt securities of that series.

If any event of default relating to outstanding debt securities of any series occurs and is continuing, either the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may declare the principal of all of the outstanding debt securities of such

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

series to be due and immediately payable.

The holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee, or of exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee, with respect to the debt securities of that series. The trustee may act in any way that is consistent with those directions and may decline to act if any of the directions is contrary to law or to the indentures or would involve the trustee in personal liability.

The holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may on behalf of the holders of all of the outstanding debt securities of the series waive any past default (and its consequences) under the indentures relating to the series, except a default (a) in the payment of the principal of or any premium or interest on any of the debt securities of the series or (b) with respect to a covenant or provision of such indentures which, under the terms of such indentures, cannot be modified or amended without the consent of the holders of all of the outstanding debt securities of the series affected.

The indentures will contain provisions entitling the trustee, subject to the duty of the trustee during an event of default to act with the required standard of care, to be indemnified by the holders of the debt securities of the relevant series before proceeding to exercise any right or power under the indentures at the request of those holders.

The indentures will require the trustee to, within 90 days after the occurrence of a default known to it with respect to any series of outstanding debt securities, give the holders of that series notice of the default if uncured and unwaived. However, the trustee may withhold this notice if it in good faith determines that the withholding of this notice is in the interest of those holders. However, the trustee may not withhold this notice in the case of a default in payment of principal, premium, interest or sinking fund installment with respect to any debt securities of the series. The above notice shall not be given until at least 30 days after the occurrence of a default in the performance of or a breach of a covenant or warranty in the applicable indenture other than a covenant to make payment. The term "default" for the purpose of this provision means any event that is, or after notice or lapse of time, or both, would become, an event of default with respect to the debt securities of that series.

18

Each indenture will require us to file annually with the trustee a certificate, executed by one of our officers, indicating whether the officer has knowledge of any default under the indenture.

### Notices

Except as otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, notices to holders of bearer securities will be given by publication at least once in a daily newspaper in each of New York City and London and in any other cities specified in the bearer securities. For holders of bearer securities, notices will also be mailed to those persons whose names and addresses were previously filed with the trustee within the last two years under the indentures, within the time prescribed for the giving of that information. Notices to holders of registered securities will be sent by mail to the addresses of those holders as they appear in the security register.

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

### Defeasance

The indentures will contain a provision that, if made applicable to any series of debt securities, permits us to elect (a) to defease and be discharged from all of our obligations (subject to limited exceptions) with respect to any series of debt securities then outstanding, which we refer to below as "legal defeasance," or (b) to be released from our obligations under certain restrictive covenants, which we refer to below as "covenant defeasance". To make either of the above elections, we must:

- . deposit in trust with the trustee (a) in the case of debt securities and coupons denominated in U.S. dollars, U.S. government obligations and (b) in the case of debt securities and coupons denominated in a foreign currency, foreign government securities, which through the payment of principal and interest in accordance with their terms will provide sufficient money, U.S. government obligations and/or foreign government obligations as necessary, without reinvestment, to repay in full those debt securities; and
- . deliver to the trustee an opinion of counsel that holders of the debt securities will not recognize income, gain or loss for Federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit and related defeasance and will be subject to Federal income tax in the same amount, in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if such deposit and related defeasance had not occurred (in the case of legal defeasance only, such opinion of counsel to be based on a ruling of the Internal Revenue Service or other change in applicable Federal income tax law).

### Governing Law

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

### DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation authorizes our board of directors without further stockholder action, to provide for the issuance of up to 10 million shares of preferred stock, in one or more series, and to fix the designations, terms, and relative rights and preferences, including the dividend rate, voting rights, conversion rights, redemption and sinking fund provisions and liquidation values of each of these series, except that the holders of preferred stock:

- . will not be entitled to more than the lesser of one vote per \$100 of liquidation value or one vote per share when voting as a class with the holders of shares of other capital stock; and

19

- . will not be entitled to vote on any matter separately as a class, except to the extent required by law or as specified with respect to each series with respect to any amendment or alteration of the provisions of the certificate of incorporation that would adversely affect the powers, preferences or special rights of the applicable series of preferred stock, or our failure to pay dividends on any series of preferred stock in full for any six quarterly dividend payment periods, whether or not consecutive, in which case the number of directors may be increased by two and the holders of outstanding

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

shares of preferred stock then similarly entitled will be entitled to elect the two additional directors until full accumulated dividends on all such shares of preferred stock have been paid.

We may amend from time to time our certificate of incorporation to increase the number of authorized shares of preferred stock. As of the date of this prospectus, we have no preferred stock outstanding. We have 602,944 shares of preferred stock reserved for issuance upon exercise of rights under the rights agreement described below under "Preferred Stock Purchase Rights".

The particular terms of any series of preferred stock being offered by us under this shelf registration will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to that series of preferred stock. Those terms may include:

- . the title and liquidation preference per share of the preferred stock and the number of shares offered;
- . the purchase price of the preferred stock;
- . the dividend rate (or method of calculation), the dates on which dividends will be paid and the date from which dividends will begin to accumulate;
- . any redemption or sinking fund provisions of the preferred stock;
- . any conversion provisions of the preferred stock;
- . the voting rights, if any, of the preferred stock; and
- . any additional dividend, liquidation, redemption, sinking fund and other rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions of the preferred stock.

If the terms of any series of preferred stock being offered differ from the terms set forth in this prospectus, those terms will also be disclosed in the prospectus supplement relating to that series of preferred stock. The summary in this prospectus is not complete. You should refer to the certificate of amendment to our

certificate of incorporation establishing a particular series of preferred stock which will be filed with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware and the SEC in connection with the offering of the preferred stock.

The preferred stock will, when issued, be fully paid and nonassessable.

**Dividend Rights.** The preferred stock will be preferred over the common stock as to payment of dividends. Before any dividends or distributions (other than dividends or distributions payable in common stock) on the common stock shall be declared and set apart for payment or paid, the holders of shares of each series of preferred stock will be entitled to receive dividends when, as and if declared by our board of directors. We will pay those dividends either in cash, shares of common stock or preferred stock or otherwise, at the rate and on the date or dates set forth in the prospectus supplement. With respect to each series of preferred stock, the dividends on each share of the series will be cumulative from the date of issue of the share unless some other date is set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the series. Accruals of dividends will not bear interest.



## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

Rights Upon Liquidation. The preferred stock will be preferred over the common stock as to assets so that the holders of each series of preferred stock will be entitled to be paid, upon our voluntary or involuntary liquidation, dissolution or winding up and before any distribution is made to the holders of common stock, the amount set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. However, in this case the holders of preferred stock will not be entitled to any other or further payment. If upon any liquidation, dissolution or winding up our net assets are insufficient to permit the payment in full of the respective amounts to which the holders of all outstanding preferred stock are entitled, our entire remaining net assets will be distributed among the holders of each series of preferred stock in amounts proportional to the full amounts to which the holders of each series are entitled.

Redemption. All shares of any series of preferred stock will be redeemable to the extent set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the series. All shares of any series of preferred stock will be convertible into shares of common stock or into shares of any other series of preferred stock to the extent set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Voting Rights. Except as indicated in the prospectus supplement, the holders of preferred stock shall be entitled to one vote for each share of preferred stock held by them on all matters properly presented to stockholders. The holders of common stock and the holders of all series of preferred stock will vote together as one class.

### DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

We may issue, either separately or together with other securities, shares of our common stock. Under our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, we are authorized to issue up to 100 million shares of our common stock. A prospectus supplement relating to an offering of common stock, or other securities convertible or exchangeable for, or exercisable into, common stock, will describe the relevant terms, including the number of shares offered, any initial offering price, and market price and dividend information, as well as, if applicable, information on other related securities. See "Description of Capital Securities."

### DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

General. We may, at our option, elect to offer fractional shares of preferred stock, rather than full shares of preferred stock. If we exercise this option, we will issue to the public receipts for depositary shares, and each of these depositary shares will represent a fraction (to be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement) of a share of a particular series of preferred stock.

The shares of any series of preferred stock underlying the depositary shares will be deposited under a deposit agreement between us and a bank or trust company selected by us. The depositary will have its principal office in the United States and a combined capital and surplus of at least \$50 million. Subject to the terms of the deposit agreement, each owner of a depositary share will be entitled, in proportion to the applicable fraction of a share of preferred stock underlying that depositary share, to all the rights and preferences of the preferred stock underlying that depositary share. Those rights include dividend, voting, redemption and liquidation rights.

The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the deposit agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to those persons purchasing the fractional shares of preferred stock underlying the depositary shares, in accordance with the terms of the offering. Copies of the forms of deposit agreement and depositary receipt will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement. The following summary of the deposit agreement,

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

the depositary shares and the depositary receipts is not complete. You should refer to the forms of the deposit agreement and depositary receipts that will be filed with the SEC in connection with the offering of the specific depositary shares.

21

Pending the preparation of definitive engraved depositary receipts, the depositary may, upon our written order, issue temporary depositary receipts substantially identical to the definitive depositary receipts but not in definitive form. These temporary depositary receipts entitle their holders to all the rights of definitive depositary receipts which are to be prepared without unreasonable delay. Temporary depositary receipts will then be exchangeable for definitive depositary receipts at our expense.

**Dividends and Other Distributions.** The depositary will distribute all cash dividends or other cash distributions received with respect to the preferred stock to the record holders of depositary shares relating to the preferred stock in proportion to the number of depositary shares owned by those holders.

If there is a distribution other than in cash, the depositary will distribute property received by it to the record holders of depositary shares that are entitled to receive the distribution, unless the depositary determines that it is not feasible to make the distribution. If this occurs, the depositary may, with our approval, sell the property and distribute the net proceeds from the sale to the applicable holders.

**Redemption of Depositary Shares.** If a series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares is subject to redemption, the depositary shares will be redeemed from the proceeds received by the depositary resulting from the redemption, in whole or in part, of that series of preferred stock held by the depositary. The redemption price per depositary share will be equal to the applicable fraction of the redemption price per share payable with respect to that series of the preferred stock. Whenever we redeem shares of preferred stock that are held by the depositary, the depositary will redeem, as of the same redemption date, the number of depositary shares representing the shares of preferred stock so redeemed. If fewer than all the depositary shares are to be redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by lot or pro rata as may be determined by the depositary.

**Voting the Preferred Stock.** Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which the holders of the preferred stock are entitled to vote, the depositary will mail the information contained in the notice to the record holders of the depositary shares underlying the preferred stock. Each record holder of the depositary shares on the record date (which will be the same date as the record date for the preferred stock) will be entitled to instruct the depositary as to the exercise of the voting rights pertaining to the amount of the preferred stock represented by such holder's depositary shares. The depositary will then try, as far as practicable, to vote the number of shares of preferred stock underlying those depositary shares in accordance with such instructions, and we will agree to take all actions which may be deemed necessary by the depositary to enable the depositary to do so. The depositary will not vote the shares of preferred stock to the extent it does not receive specific instructions from the holders of depositary shares underlying the preferred stock.

**Amendment and Termination of the Depositary Agreement.** The form of depositary receipt evidencing the depositary shares and any provision of the deposit agreement may at any time be amended by agreement between us and the depositary. However, any amendment which materially and adversely alters the

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

rights of the holders of depositary shares will not be effective unless the amendment has been approved by the holders of at least a majority of the depositary shares then outstanding. The deposit agreement may be terminated by us or by the depositary only if (a) all outstanding depositary shares have been redeemed or (b) there has been a final distribution of the underlying preferred stock in connection with our liquidation, dissolution or winding up and the preferred stock has been distributed to the holders of depositary receipts.

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

22

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

Neither we nor the depositary will be liable if either of us is prevented or delayed by law or any circumstance beyond our control in performing our respective obligations under the deposit agreement. Our obligations and those of the depositary will be limited to performance in good faith of our respective duties under the deposit agreement. Neither we nor they will be obligated to prosecute or defend any legal proceeding in respect of any depositary shares or preferred stock unless satisfactory indemnity is furnished. We and the depositary may rely upon written advice of counsel or accountants, or upon information provided by persons presenting preferred stock for deposit, holders of depositary receipts or other persons believed to be competent and on documents believed to be genuine.

**Resignation and Removal of Depositary.** The depositary may resign at any time by delivering notice to us of its election to resign. We may remove the depositary at any time. Any resignation or removal will take effect upon the appointment of a successor depositary and its acceptance of the appointment. The successor depositary must be appointed within 60 days after delivery of the notice of resignation or removal and must be a bank or trust company having its principal office in the United States and having a combined capital and surplus of at least \$50 million.

### DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES WARRANTS

We may issue securities warrants for the purchase of debt securities, preferred stock or common stock. Securities warrants may be issued independently or together with debt securities, preferred stock or common stock and may be attached to or separate from any offered securities. Each series of securities warrants will be issued under a separate warrant agreement to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as warrant agent. The securities warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the securities warrants and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any registered holders of securities warrants or beneficial owners of securities warrants. This summary of some provisions of the securities warrants is not complete. You should refer to the securities warrant agreement, including the forms of securities warrant certificate representing the securities warrants, relating to the specific securities

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

warrants being offered for the complete terms of the securities warrant agreement and the securities warrants. That securities warrant agreement, together with the terms of securities warrant certificate and securities warrants, will be filed with the SEC in connection with the offering of the specific securities warrants.

The particular terms of any issue of securities warrants will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to the issue. Those terms may include:

- . the designation, aggregate principal amount, currencies, denominations and terms of the series of debt securities purchasable upon exercise of securities warrants to purchase debt securities and the price at which the debt securities may be purchased upon exercise;
- . the designation, number of shares, stated value and terms (including, without limitation, liquidation, dividend, conversion and voting rights) of the series of preferred stock purchasable upon exercise of securities warrants to purchase shares of preferred stock and the price at which such number of shares of preferred stock of such series may be purchased upon such exercise;
- . the number of shares of common stock purchasable upon the exercise of securities warrants to purchase shares of common stock and the price at which such number of shares of common stock may be purchased upon such exercise;

23

- . the date on which the right to exercise the securities warrants will commence and the date on which the right will expire;
- . the U.S. Federal income tax consequences applicable to the securities warrants; and
- . any other terms of the securities warrants.

Securities warrants for the purchase of preferred stock and common stock will be offered and exercisable for U.S. dollars only. Securities warrants will be issued in registered form only. The exercise price for securities warrants will be subject to adjustment in accordance with the applicable prospectus supplement.

Each securities warrant will entitle its holder to purchase the principal amount of debt securities or the number of shares of preferred stock or common stock at the exercise price set forth in, or calculable as set forth in, the applicable prospectus supplement. The exercise price may be adjusted upon the occurrence of certain events as set forth in the prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised securities warrants will become void. We will specify the place or places where, and the manner in which, securities warrants may be exercised in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Prior to the exercise of any securities warrants to purchase debt securities, preferred stock or common stock, holders of the securities warrants will not have any of the rights of holders of the debt securities, preferred stock or common stock purchasable upon exercise, including:

- . in the case of securities warrants for the purchase of debt

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

securities, the right to receive payments of principal of, any premium or interest on the debt securities purchasable upon exercise or to enforce covenants in the applicable indenture; or

- . in the case of securities warrants for the purchase of preferred stock or common stock, the right to vote or to receive any payments of dividends on the preferred stock or common stock purchasable upon exercise.

### DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL SECURITIES

#### Common Stock

As of the date of this prospectus, we are authorized to issue up to 100 million shares of common stock. As of April 1, 2001, we had 43,548,886 shares of common stock issued and outstanding and had reserved 5,753,598 additional shares of common stock for issuance under our various stock compensation plans.

The following summary is not complete and is not intended to give full effect to provisions of statutory or common law. You should refer to the applicable provisions of the following documents:

- . the amended and restated certificate of incorporation, which is incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to our Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2000, and
- . the restated and amended bylaws which are incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.2 to our Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2000.

Dividends. The holders of common stock are entitled to receive dividends when, as and if declared by our board of directors, out of funds legally available for their payment subject to the rights of holders of the preferred stock.

Voting Rights. The holders of common stock are entitled to one vote per share on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders.

24

Rights Upon Liquidation. In the event of our voluntary or involuntary liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of common stock will be entitled to share equally in any of our assets available for distribution after the payment in full of all debts and distributions and after the holders of all series of outstanding preferred stock have received their liquidation preferences in full.

Miscellaneous. The outstanding shares of common stock are fully paid and nonassessable. The holders of common stock are not entitled to preemptive or redemption rights. Shares of common stock are not convertible into shares of any other class of capital stock. EquiServe, N.A. is the transfer agent and registrar for the common stock.

#### Preferred Stock

Our Board of Directors is authorized to approve the issuance of Arch Coal preferred stock without any approval of stockholders. Our Board determines the rights, qualification, restrictions, and limitations on each series of Arch Coal preferred stock at the time of issuance. Shares of Arch Coal preferred stock may have dividend, redemption, voting and liquidation rights taking priority over Arch Coal common stock, and may be convertible into Arch Coal

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

common stock. As of the date of this prospectus, there are no outstanding shares of preferred stock.

### Preferred Stock Purchase Rights

On March 3, 2000, we entered into a rights agreement with First Chicago Trust Company of New York, as rights agent, which is a stockholder rights plan providing for a dividend of one preferred stock purchase right for each outstanding share of our common stock. We issued the dividend to stockholders of record on March 20, 2000, and holders of shares of common stock issued since that date are issued rights with their shares. The rights trade automatically with shares of common stock and become exercisable only under certain circumstances as described below. The rights are designed to protect our interests and the interests of our stockholders against coercive takeover tactics. The purpose of the rights is to encourage potential acquirors to negotiate with our board of directors prior to attempting a takeover and to provide our board with leverage in negotiating on behalf of all stockholders the terms of any proposed takeover. The rights may have certain anti-takeover effects. The rights should not, however, interfere with any merger or other business combination approved by our board of directors.

Until a right is exercised, the holder of a right will have no rights as an Arch Coal stockholder, including, without limitation, the right to vote or to receive dividends. Upon becoming exercisable, each right will entitle its holder to purchase from us one one-hundredth of a share of Series One Junior Preferred Stock, par value \$0.01 per share, at a purchase price of \$42.00 per right, subject to adjustment. In general, the rights will not be exercisable until the earlier of (a) the close of business on the tenth business day after the date that we learn that a person or group or an affiliate or associate of the person or group has acquired, or has obtained the right to acquire, beneficial ownership of 20% or more of our outstanding common stock and (b) the close of business on the tenth business day following the commencement of, or first public disclosure of an intent to commence, a tender or exchange offer for 20% or more of our outstanding common stock. Below we refer to the earlier of those dates as the "distribution date" and the person or group acquiring at least 20% of our common stock as an "acquiring person". You should assume that any of the following provisions that refers to an acquiring person applies to any associate or affiliate of the acquiring person as well.

If, after the distribution date, any acquiring person acquires 20% or more of our outstanding voting stock without the prior approval of our board of directors, each right will entitle its holder to acquire the number of shares of our common stock that is equal to the result obtained by multiplying the then current purchase price by the number of one one-hundredths of a share of preferred stock for which a right is then exercisable and dividing that product by 50% of the then current per-share market price of our common stock.

25

If any acquiring person acquires more than 20% but less than 50% of the outstanding shares of our common stock subsequent to the distribution date without prior written consent of our board of directors, each right may be exchanged by our board of directors for one share of our common stock.

In the event that, following the distribution date, we are acquired in a merger or other business combination in which we are not the surviving corporation, or in which 50% or more of our assets or assets representing 50% or more of our revenues or cash flow are sold in one or several transactions without the prior written consent of our board of directors, each right will entitle its holder to receive the number of shares of the acquiring company's

## Edgar Filing: ARCH COAL INC - Form 424B2

common stock as is equal to the result obtained by multiplying the then current purchase price by the number of one one-hundredths of a share of preferred stock for which the right is then exercisable and dividing that product by 50% of the then current market price per share of the common stock of the acquiring company.

Any rights that are at any time beneficially owned by an acquiring person will be null and void, and any holder of such rights, including any purported transferee or subsequent holder, will be unable to exercise the rights.

The rights will expire at the close of business on March 20, 2010, unless redeemed or exchanged before that time. At any time prior to the earlier of (a) the time a person or group becomes an acquiring person and (b) the expiration date, our board of directors may exchange all or part of the then outstanding and exercisable rights for shares of our common stock at an exchange ratio of one share of common stock per right or redeem the rights in whole, but not in part, at a price of \$0.01 per right. The exchange rate and redemption price are subject to adjustment as provided in the rights agreement.

The preceding summary is not complete and is not intended to give full effect to provisions of statutory or common law. You should refer to the applicable provisions of the rights agreement and the form of right certificate, which are incorporated by reference to Exhibit 1 to our Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on March 9, 2000.

In the event of a proposed merger or tender offer, proxy contest or other attempt to gain control of us and not approved by our board of directors, it would be possible for the board to authorize the issuance of one or more series of preferred stock with voting rights or other rights and preferences which would impede the success of the proposed merger, tender offer, proxy contest or other attempt to gain control of us. This authority may be limited by applicable law, the restated articles and the applicable rules of the stock exchanges upon which the common stock is listed. The consent of our stockholders would not be required for any such issuance of preferred stock.

### Special Charter Provisions

Our certificate of incorporation provides that:

- . our board of directors is classified into three classes;