

LINCOLN NATIONAL CORP
Form S-3ASR
April 30, 2012

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 30, 2012

File No. 333-

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

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

Lincoln National Corporation
(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Its Charter)

Indiana
(State or Other Jurisdiction of Incorporation or Organization)

35-1140070
(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

150 N. Radnor Chester Road
Radnor, PA 19087
(484) 583-1400
(Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including
Area Code, of Registrant's Principal Executive Offices)

Lincoln National Corporation
2009 Amended and Restated Incentive Compensation Plan
(Full Title of Plan)

Charles A. Brawley, III
Senior Vice President, Associate General Counsel & Secretary
Lincoln National Corporation
150 N. Radnor Chester Road
Radnor, PA 19087
(484) 583-1400
(Name, Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including
Area Code, of Agent for Service)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of Securities to be registered | Amount to be registered | Proposed Maximum offering price per share | Proposed maximum aggregate offering price | Amount of registration fee |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| Common Stock (no par value) | 5,450,000 (1), (3) | \$23.46 (2) | \$127,857,000 | \$14,653 |

(1) Pursuant to Rule 416(a) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), there are being registered such additional shares as may be issuable pursuant to the anti-dilution provisions of the Lincoln National Corporation 2009 Amended and Restated Compensation Plan (the “Plan”), by reason of stock splits, stock dividends, recapitalizations or similar transactions. The shares of common stock to which this Registration Statement relates are to be issued upon exercise of options and in connection with certain other stock-related awards, all of which will be granted or awarded under the Plan for no consideration.

(2) Estimated solely for purposes of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rules 457(c) and 457(h)(1) under the Securities Act based upon the average of the high and low sale prices of LNC’s Common Stock on April 23, 2012 as reported on the New York Stock Exchange composite transactions tape. Pursuant to Rule 457(p), \$4,653 of the fee that has already been paid with respect to the initial offering price (\$92,290,000) for a portion of the securities that were previously registered pursuant to Lincoln National Corporation’s Registration Statement Forms S-3 (Registration No. 333-159290) filed on May 15, 2009 respectively, and were not sold thereunder, is being used to offset the registration fee due herewith.

(3) Pursuant to Rule 429 under the Securities Act, the prospectus included in this registration statement is a combined prospectus, which also relates to LNC's Registration Statements on Form S-3, Registration No. 333-32667, 333-124976, 333-142871 and 333-159290 (the Prior Registration Statements"). This Registration Statement also constitutes the third post-effective amendment to the Prior Registration Statements. Such post-effective amendment shall hereafter become effective concurrently with the effectiveness of this Registration Statement in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities

Act of 1933. The aggregate amount of Common Stock eligible to be sold and not previously sold under the Prior Registration Statements prior to the effective date of this Registration Statement shall be carried forward to this Registration Statement. LNC previously paid a registration fee to the SEC in connection with those securities. The amount of securities being registered, together with the remaining securities registered under the Prior Registration Statements, represents the maximum amount of securities that are expected to be offered for sale.

PROSPECTUS

44,126,512 Shares

LINCOLN NATIONAL CORPORATION
COMMON STOCK
(No Par Value)

Offered as set forth in this Prospectus pursuant to the

LINCOLN NATIONAL CORPORATION
2009 AMENDED AND RESTATED
INCENTIVE COMPENSATION PLAN

This Prospectus relates to shares of our Common Stock to be issued under the Lincoln National Corporation 2009 Amended and Restated Incentive Compensation Plan, or the Plan, to executives, employees and other persons who provide services to us or our subsidiaries or to eligible persons holding either agents' or brokers' contracts with one of our subsidiaries.

Our Common Stock is listed on The New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "LNC." The last reported sale price on April 23, 2012 was \$23.86 per share.

Investing in our Common Stock involves risks. See "Risk Factors" beginning on page 3 of this prospectus.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information that is different. We are not making an offer of these securities in any state or jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. The information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus is accurate only as of the respective dates of such information. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

The date of this Prospectus is April 30, 2012.

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It is important for you to read and consider all information contained in this prospectus in making your investment decision. You should also read and consider the additional information under the caption “Where You Can Find More Information.”

Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this prospectus to “LNC,” “we,” “our,” “us,” or similar terms refer to Lincoln National Corporation together with its subsidiaries.

REQUIRED DISCLOSURE FOR NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTS

THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA HAS NOT APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED OF THIS OFFERING NOR HAS THE COMMISSIONER PASSED UPON THE ACCURACY OR ADEQUACY OF THIS PROSPECTUS.

The Company

LNC is a holding company, which operates multiple insurance and retirement businesses through subsidiary companies. Through our business segments, we sell a wide range of wealth protection, accumulation and retirement income products and solutions. These products include fixed and indexed annuities, variable annuities, universal life insurance (“UL”), variable universal life insurance (“VUL”), linked-benefit UL, term life insurance, mutual funds and group life, disability and dental. LNC was organized under the laws of the state of Indiana in 1968. We currently maintain our principal executive offices at 150 N. Radnor Chester Road, Radnor, Pennsylvania 19087, and our telephone number is (484) 583-1400. “Lincoln Financial Group” is the marketing name for LNC and its subsidiary companies. As of December 31, 2011, LNC had consolidated assets of \$202.9 billion and consolidated stockholders’ equity of \$14.2 billion. For the year ended December 31, 2011, LNC had total revenue of \$10.6 billion and net income of \$294 million.

We provide products and services and report results through the following four business segments: Annuities, Retirement Plan Services, Life Insurance and Group Protection.

We also have Other Operations, which includes the financial data for operations that are not directly related to the business segments. Other Operations also includes investments related to the excess capital in our insurance subsidiaries; investments in media properties and other corporate investments; benefit plan net liability; the unamortized deferred gain on indemnity reinsurance related to the sale of reinsurance to Swiss Re Life & Health America Inc., referred to as “Swiss Re,” in 2001; the results of certain disability income business; our run-off institutional pension business; and debt costs.

Our former subsidiaries, Delaware Management Holdings, Inc. and Lincoln UK are reported in discontinued operations for all periods presented. See “Part II—Item 7. Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Introduction—Acquisitions and Dispositions” and “Part II—Item 8. Financial Statements and Supplementary Data—Note 3” in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Except for historical information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, statements made, or incorporated by reference, in this prospectus are “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 (“PSLRA”). A forward-looking statement is a statement that is not a historical fact and, without limitation, includes any statement that may predict, forecast, indicate or imply future results, performance or achievements, and may contain words like: “believe,” “anticipate,” “expect,” “estimate,” “project,” “will,” “sha” and other words or phrases with similar meaning in connection with a discussion of future operating or financial performance. In particular, these include statements relating to future actions, trends in our business, prospective services or products, future performance or financial results and the outcome of contingencies, such as legal proceedings. We claim the protection afforded by the safe harbor for forward-looking statements provided by the PSLRA.

Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to differ materially from the results contained in the forward-looking statements. Risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to vary materially, some of which are described within the forward-looking statements, include, among others:

Deterioration in general economic and business conditions that may affect account values, investment results, guaranteed benefit liabilities, premium levels, claims experience and the level of pension benefit costs, funding and investment results;

- Adverse global capital and credit market conditions could affect our ability to raise capital, if necessary, and may cause us to realize impairments on investments and certain intangible assets, including goodwill and a valuation allowance against deferred tax assets, which may reduce future earnings and/or affect our financial condition and ability to raise additional capital or refinance existing debt as it matures;
- Because of our holding company structure, the inability of our subsidiaries to pay dividends to the holding company in sufficient amounts could harm the holding company's ability to meet its obligations;
- Legislative, regulatory or tax changes, both domestic and foreign, that affect the cost of, or demand for, our subsidiaries' products, the required amount of reserves and/or surplus, or otherwise affect our ability to conduct business, including changes to statutory reserve requirements related to secondary guarantees under universal life

- such as a change to reserve calculations under Actuarial Guideline 38 (also known as The Application of the Valuation of Life Insurance Policies Model Regulation, or “AG38”) and variable annuity products such as Actuarial Guideline 43 (also known as Commissioners Annuity Reserve Valuation Method for Variable Annuities, or “AG43”); restrictions on revenue sharing and 12b-1 payments; and the potential for U.S. Federal tax reform;
- Uncertainty about the effect of rules and regulations to be promulgated under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the “Dodd-Frank Act”) on us and the economy and the financial services sector in particular;
- The initiation of legal or regulatory proceedings against us, and the outcome of any legal or regulatory proceedings, such as: adverse actions related to present or past business practices common in businesses in which we compete; adverse decisions in significant actions including, but not limited to, actions brought by federal and state authorities and class action cases; new decisions that result in changes in law; and unexpected trial court rulings;
- Declines in or sustained low interest rates causing a reduction in investment income, the interest margins of our businesses, estimated gross profits and demand for our products;
- A decline in the equity markets causing a reduction in the sales of our subsidiaries’ products, a reduction of asset-based fees that our subsidiaries charge on various investment and insurance products, an acceleration of amortization of deferred acquisition costs (“DAC”), value of business acquired (“VOBA”), deferred sales inducements (“DSI”) and deferred front end sales loads (“DFEL”), and an increase in liabilities related to guaranteed benefit features of our subsidiaries’ variable annuity products;
- Ineffectiveness of our risk management policies and procedures, including various hedging strategies used to offset the effect of changes in the value of liabilities due to changes in the level and volatility of the equity markets and interest rates;
- A deviation in actual experience regarding future persistency, mortality, morbidity, interest rates or equity market returns from the assumptions used in pricing our subsidiaries’ products, in establishing related insurance reserves and in the amortization of DAC, VOBA, DSI and DFEL, which may reduce future earnings;
- Changes in accounting principles generally accepted in the United States, or “GAAP,” including the potential incorporation of International Financial Reporting Standards into the U.S. financial reporting system, that may result in unanticipated changes to our net income;
- Lowering of one or more of our debt ratings issued by nationally recognized statistical rating organizations and the adverse effect such action may have on our ability to raise capital and on our liquidity and financial condition;
- Lowering of one or more of the insurer financial strength ratings of our insurance subsidiaries and the adverse effect such action may have on the premium writings, policy retention, profitability of our insurance subsidiaries and liquidity;
- Significant credit, accounting, fraud, corporate governance or other issues that may adversely affect the value of certain investments in our portfolios as well as counterparties to which we are exposed to credit risk requiring that we realize losses on investments;
- The effect of acquisitions and divestitures, restructurings, product withdrawals and other unusual items, including our ability to integrate acquisitions and to obtain the anticipated results and synergies from acquisitions;
 - The adequacy and collectibility of reinsurance that we have purchased;
- Acts of terrorism, a pandemic, war or other man-made and natural catastrophes that may adversely affect our businesses and the cost and availability of reinsurance;
- Competitive conditions, including pricing pressures, new product offerings and the emergence of new competitors, that may affect the level of premiums and fees that our subsidiaries can charge for their products;
- The unknown effect on our subsidiaries’ businesses resulting from changes in the demographics of their client base, as aging baby-boomers move from the asset-accumulation stage to the asset-distribution stage of life; and
 - Loss of key management, financial planners or wholesalers.

The risks included here are not exhaustive. Other sections of this prospectus, including “Risk Factors” beginning on page 3, our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K and other

documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”) include additional factors that could affect our businesses and financial performance. Moreover, we operate in a rapidly changing and competitive environment. New risk factors emerge from time to time, and it is not possible for management to predict all such risk factors. Further, it is not possible to assess the impact of all risk factors on our business or the extent to which any factor, or combination of factors, may cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in any forward-looking statements. Given these risks and uncertainties, investors should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements as a prediction of actual results. In addition, we

disclaim any obligation to update any forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances that occur after the date of this prospectus.

RISK FACTORS

You should carefully consider the risks described below and those incorporated by reference into this prospectus before making an investment decision in the Plan generally, or in the LNC Common Stock Account specifically. The risks and uncertainties described below and incorporated by reference into this prospectus are not the only ones facing our company. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also impair our business operations. If any of these risks actually occur, our business, financial condition and results of operations could be materially affected. In that case, the value of our Common Stock could decline substantially. In addition, there are risks in investing your money in the investment choices offering under the Plan. These risks are discussed with the description of each investment option.

Legislative, Regulatory and Tax

Our businesses are heavily regulated and changes in regulation may affect our insurance subsidiary capital requirements or reduce our profitability.

Our insurance subsidiaries are subject to extensive supervision and regulation in the states in which we do business. The supervision and regulation relate to numerous aspects of our business and financial condition. The primary purpose of the supervision and regulation is the protection of our insurance contract holders, and not our investors. The extent of regulation varies, but generally is governed by state statutes. These statutes delegate regulatory, supervisory and administrative authority to state insurance departments. This system of supervision and regulation covers, among other things:

- Standards of minimum capital requirements and solvency, including risk based capital (“RBC”) measurements;
 - Restrictions of certain transactions between our insurance subsidiaries and their affiliates;
 - Restrictions on the nature, quality and concentration of investments;
- Restrictions on the types of terms and conditions that we can include in the insurance policies offered by our primary insurance operations;
 - Limitations on the amount of dividends that insurance subsidiaries can pay;
 - Licensing status of the company;
 - Certain required methods of accounting;
 - Reserves for unearned premiums, losses and other purposes; and
- Assignment of residual market business and potential assessments for the provision of funds necessary for the settlement of covered claims under certain policies provided by impaired, insolvent or failed insurance companies.

Although we endeavor to maintain all required licenses and approvals our businesses may not fully comply with the wide variety of applicable laws and regulations or the relevant authority’s interpretation of the laws and regulations, which may change from time to time. Also, regulatory authorities have relatively broad discretion to grant, renew or revoke licenses and approvals. If we do not have the requisite licenses and approvals or do not comply with applicable regulatory requirements, the insurance regulatory authorities could preclude or temporarily suspend us from carrying on some or all of our activities or impose substantial fines. Further, insurance regulatory authorities have relatively broad discretion to issue orders of supervision, which permit such authorities to supervise the business and operations of an insurance company. As of December 31, 2011, no state insurance regulatory authority had imposed on us any substantial fines or revoked or suspended any of our licenses to conduct insurance business in any state or issued an

order of supervision with respect to our insurance subsidiaries, which would have a material adverse effect on our results of operations or financial condition. In addition, Lincoln Financial Advisors, Lincoln Financial Securities and Lincoln Financial Distributors, as well as our variable annuities and variable life insurance products, are subject to regulation and supervision by the SEC and the Financial Institutions Industry Regulatory Authority (“FINRA”). These laws and regulations generally grant supervisory agencies and self-regulatory organizations broad administrative powers, including the power to limit or restrict the subsidiaries from carrying on their businesses in the event that they fail to comply with such laws and regulations.

Recently, there has been an increase in potential federal initiatives that would affect the financial services industry. On July 21, 2010, President Obama signed into law the Dodd-Frank Act, a wide-ranging Act that includes a number of reforms of the financial services industry and financial products. The Dodd-Frank Act includes, among other things, changes to the rules governing derivatives; restrictions on proprietary trading by certain entities; the imposition of capital and leverage requirements on bank and savings and loan holding companies; a study by the SEC of the rules governing broker-dealers and investment advisers with respect to individual investors and investment advice, followed potentially by rulemaking; the creation of a new Federal Insurance Office within the U.S. Treasury to gather information regarding the insurance industry; the creation of a resolution authority to unwind failing institutions, funded on a post-event basis; the creation of a new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to protect consumers of certain financial products; and changes to executive compensation and certain corporate governance rules, among other things. The Dodd-Frank Act requires significant rulemaking across numerous agencies within the federal government. Although the rulemaking process began in the second half of 2010, it is proceeding substantially slower than the aggressive schedule contemplated at the time of enactment. Consequently, the ultimate impact of these provisions on our businesses (including product offerings), results of operations, liquidity or capital resources is currently indeterminable.

Many of the foregoing regulatory or governmental bodies have the authority to review our products and business practices and those of our agents and employees. In recent years, there has been increased scrutiny of our businesses by these bodies, which has included more extensive examinations, regular sweep inquiries and more detailed review of disclosure documents. These regulatory or governmental bodies may bring regulatory or other legal actions against us if, in their view, our practices, or those of our agents or employees, are improper.

These actions can result in substantial fines, penalties or prohibitions or restrictions on our business activities and could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations or financial condition.

Changes to the calculation of reserves and attempts to mitigate the impact of Regulation XXX and Actuarial Guideline 38 may fail in whole or in part resulting in an adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

The Valuation of Life Insurance Policies Model Regulation (“XXX”) requires insurers to establish additional statutory reserves for term life insurance policies with long-term premium guarantees and UL policies with secondary guarantees. In addition, Actuarial Guideline 38 (“AG38”), commonly known as “AXXX,” clarifies the application of XXX with respect to certain UL insurance policies with secondary guarantees. Virtually all of our newly issued term and the majority of our newly issued UL insurance products are now affected by XXX and AG38. The application of both AG38 and XXX involve numerous interpretations. In the fourth quarter of 2011, the Life Actuarial Task Force, an advisory group to the Life Insurance and Annuities (A) Committee of the NAIC, submitted a draft statement on the application of AG38 (the “Statement”) to the Committee. The NAIC’s Executive Committee set up a joint working group (the “Joint Working Group”) comprised of members of the Life Insurance and Annuities (A) Committee and the Financial Condition (E) Committee to review the Statement and the current application of AG38 to determine whether new interim guidelines should be developed for the products within the scope of AG38. The Joint Working Group has developed a draft framework that proposes to evaluate in-force reserves based on an asset adequacy analysis incorporating moderately adverse scenarios. New business written after a certain date, yet to be specified, would be reserved using a formulaic approach consistent with the Statement, as modified or clarified by the NAIC. Any interim guidelines would be in place only until principles-based reserving is implemented. Because the draft framework contains many open issues, we cannot predict its impact on our statutory reserves. However, a change to the method for calculating reserves may require us to significantly increase our statutory reserves for UL policies with secondary guarantees. Further, changes in the method of calculating reserves may also impact the future profitability and sales of our UL insurance policies with secondary guarantees.

We have implemented reinsurance and capital management actions to mitigate the capital impact of XXX and AG38, including the use of letters of credit to support the reinsurance provided by captive reinsurance subsidiaries. Although formal details have not been provided, we anticipate the rating agencies may require a portion of these letters of credit to be included in our leverage calculations, which would pressure our leverage ratios and potentially our ratings. Therefore, we cannot provide assurance that there will not be regulatory, rating agency or other challenges to the actions we have taken to date. The result of those potential challenges could require us to increase statutory reserves or incur higher operating and/or tax costs.

We also cannot provide assurance that we will be able to continue to implement actions to mitigate the impact of XXX or AG38 on future sales of term and UL insurance products. If we are unable to continue to implement those actions, we may have lower returns on such products sold than we currently anticipate and/or reduce our sales of these products.

Changes in U.S. federal income tax law could increase our tax costs and make the products that we sell less desirable.

Changes to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”), administrative rulings or court decisions could increase our effective tax rate, make our products less desirable and lower our net income. For example, on February 13, 2012, the Obama Administration released its fiscal year 2013 budget proposal including proposals which, if enacted, would affect the taxation of life insurance companies and certain life insurance products. If enacted into law, the statutory changes contemplated by the Administration’s revenue proposals would, among other things, change the method used to determine the amount of dividend income received by a life insurance company on assets held in separate accounts used to support products, including variable life insurance and variable annuity contracts, that are eligible for the dividend received deduction. The dividend received deduction reduces the amount of dividend income subject to tax and is a significant component of the difference between our actual tax expense and expected amount determined using the federal statutory tax rate of 35%. Our income tax provision for the year ended December 31, 2011 included a separate account dividend received deduction benefit of \$112 million. In addition, the proposals would affect the treatment of COLI policies by limiting the availability of certain interest deductions for companies that purchase those policies. If proposals of this type were enacted, our sale of COLI, variable annuities and variable life products could be adversely affected and our actual tax expense could increase, reducing earnings.

Legal and regulatory actions are inherent in our businesses and could result in financial losses or harm our businesses.

We are, and in the future may be, subject to legal and regulatory actions in the ordinary course of our insurance and retirement operations. Pending legal actions include proceedings relating to aspects of our businesses and operations that are specific to us and proceedings that are typical of the businesses in which we operate. Some of these proceedings have been brought on behalf of various alleged classes of complainants. In certain of these matters, the plaintiffs are seeking large and/or indeterminate amounts, including punitive or exemplary damages. Substantial legal liability in these or future legal or regulatory actions could have a material financial effect or cause significant harm to our reputation, which in turn could materially harm our business prospects. See Note 13 of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 for a description of legal and regulatory proceedings and actions. These actions include ongoing audits on behalf of multiple states’ treasury and controllers’ offices for compliance with laws and regulations concerning the identification, reporting and escheatment of unclaimed contract benefits or abandoned funds.

Changes in accounting standards issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board or other standardsetting bodies may adversely affect our financial statements.

Our financial statements are prepared in accordance with GAAP as identified in the Financial Accounting Standards Board (“FASB”) Accounting Standards Codifications™ (“ASC”). From time to time, we are required to adopt new or

revised accounting standards or guidance that are incorporated into the FASB ASC. It is possible that future accounting standards we are required to adopt could change the current accounting treatment that we apply to our consolidated financial statements and that such changes could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

For example, the FASB issued Accounting Standards Update (“ASU”) No. 2010-26, “Accounting for Costs Associated with Acquiring or Renewing Insurance Contracts” (“ASU 2010-26”), which clarifies the types of costs that insurance companies may capitalize and amortize over the life of the business. ASU 2010-26 significantly reduces the amount of acquisition cost that we will be able to defer in connection with sales of our insurance products. Although this will not affect the ultimate profitability of our products, we expect it could materially alter the pattern of our earnings. For further information, see “Part II—Item 7—Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Critical Accounting Policies—DAC, VOBA, DSI and DFEL—New DAC Methodology” in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011.

In addition, the FASB is working on several projects with the International Accounting Standards Board, which could result in significant changes as GAAP and International Financial Reporting Standards (“IFRS”) attempt to converge, including how we account for our insurance contracts and financial instruments and how our financial statements are presented. Furthermore, the SEC is considering whether and how to incorporate IFRS into the U.S. financial reporting system. The accounting changes being proposed by the FASB may result in a complete change to how we account for and report significant areas of our business, such as insurance contracts and DAC. The effective dates and transition methods are not known; however, issuers may be required to or may choose to adopt the new standards retrospectively. In this case, the issuer will report results under the new accounting method as of the effective date, as well as for all periods presented. The changes to GAAP and potential incorporation of IFRS into the U.S. financial reporting system will impose special demands on issuers in the areas of governance, employee training, internal controls, contract fulfillment and disclosure and will likely affect how we manage our business, as it will likely affect other business processes such as design of compensation plans, product design, etc.

Anti-takeover provisions could delay, deter or prevent our change in control, even if the change in control would be beneficial to LNC shareholders.

We are an Indiana corporation subject to Indiana state law. Certain provisions of Indiana law could interfere with or restrict takeover bids or other change in control events affecting us. Also, provisions in our articles of incorporation, bylaws and other agreements to which we are a party could delay, deter or prevent our change in control, even if a change in control would be beneficial to shareholders. In addition, under Indiana law, directors may, in considering the best interests of a corporation, consider the effects of any action on shareholders, employees, suppliers and customers of the corporation and the communities in which offices and other facilities are located, and other factors the directors consider pertinent. One statutory provision prohibits, except under specified circumstances, LNC from engaging in any business combination with any shareholder who owns 10% or more of our common stock (which shareholder, under the statute, would be considered an “interested shareholder”) for a period of five years following the time that such shareholder became an interested shareholder, unless such business combination is approved by the board of directors prior to such person becoming an interested shareholder. In addition, our articles of incorporation contain a provision requiring holders of at least three-fourths of our voting shares then outstanding and entitled to vote at an election of directors, voting together, to approve a transaction with an interested shareholder rather than the simple majority required under Indiana law.

In addition to the anti-takeover provisions of Indiana law, there are other factors that may delay, deter or prevent our change in control. As an insurance holding company, we are regulated as an insurance holding company and are subject to the insurance holding company acts of the states in which our insurance company subsidiaries are domiciled. The insurance holding company acts and regulations restrict the ability of any person to obtain control of an insurance company without prior regulatory approval. Under those statutes and regulations, without such approval (or an exemption), no person may acquire any voting security of a domestic insurance company, or an insurance holding company which controls an insurance company, or merge with such a holding company, if as a result of such transaction such person would “control” the insurance holding company or insurance company. “Control” is generally defined as the direct or indirect power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of a person and is presumed to exist if a person directly or indirectly owns or controls 10% or more of the voting securities of another person.

Market Conditions

Difficult conditions in the global capital markets and the economy generally may materially adversely affect our business and results of operations.

Our results of operations are materially affected by conditions in the global capital markets and the economy generally, both in the U.S. and elsewhere around the world. Concerns over the viability of the European Union and its ability to resolve the European debt crisis, the ability of the U.S. government to reign in the U.S. deficit, continued high unemployment and a stagnant real estate market in the U.S. have contributed to increased volatility and diminished expectations for the economy and the markets going forward. These events may have an adverse effect on us given our credit and equity market exposure. Our revenues are likely to decline in such circumstances and our profit margins could erode. In addition, in the event of extreme prolonged market events, such as the global credit crisis and recession that occurred during 2008 and 2009, we could incur significant losses. Even in the absence of a market downturn, we are exposed to substantial risk of loss due to market volatility.

Factors such as consumer spending, business investment, domestic and foreign government spending, the volatility and strength of the capital markets, the potential for inflation or deflation and uncertainty over domestic and foreign government actions all affect the business and economic environment and, ultimately, the amount and profitability of our business. In an economic downturn characterized by higher unemployment, lower family income, lower corporate earnings, lower business investment and lower consumer spending, the demand for our financial and insurance products could be adversely affected. In addition, we may experience an elevated incidence of claims and lapses or surrenders of policies. Our contract holders may choose to defer paying insurance premiums or stop paying insurance premiums altogether. Adverse changes in the economy could affect earnings negatively and could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

Changes in interest rates and sustained low interest rates may cause interest rate spreads to decrease and changes in interest rates may also result in increased contract withdrawals.

Interest rate fluctuations and/or a sustained period of low interest rates could negatively affect our profitability. Some of our products, principally fixed annuities, interest-sensitive whole life, UL and the fixed portion of VUL, have interest rate guarantees that expose us to the risk that changes in interest rates will reduce our spread, or the difference between the amounts that we are required to pay under the contracts and the amounts we are able to earn on our general account investments intended to support our obligations under the contracts. Spreads are an important component of our net income. Declines in our spread or instances where the returns on our general account investments are not enough to support the interest rate guarantees on these products could have a material adverse effect on our businesses or results of operations.

In periods when interest rates are declining or remain at low levels, we may have to reinvest the cash we receive as interest or return of principal on our investments in lower yielding instruments reducing our spread.

Moreover, borrowers may prepay fixed-income securities, commercial mortgages and mortgage-backed securities in our general account in order to borrow at lower market rates, which exacerbates this risk. Lowering interest crediting rates helps to mitigate the effect of spread compression on some of our products. However, because we are entitled to reset the interest rates on our fixed rate annuities only at limited, pre-established intervals, and since many of our contracts have guaranteed minimum interest or crediting rates, our spreads could still decrease. As of December 31, 2011, 85% of our annuities business, 93% of our retirement plan services business and 92% of our life insurance business with guaranteed minimum interest or crediting rates are at their guaranteed minimums.

Our expectation for future spreads is an important component in the amortization of DAC and VOBA as it affects the future profitability of the business. Currently, new money rates continue to be at historically low levels. The Federal Reserve Board recently announced that it will keep rates low until at least late 2014. If interest rates were to remain low over a sustained period of time, this will put additional pressure on our spreads, potentially resulting in unlocking of our DAC and VOBA assets, thereby reducing net income in the affected reporting period. We would expect the effect to be most pronounced in our Life Insurance segment. For additional information on interest rate risks, see "Part II—Item 7A. Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures About Market Risk—Interest Rate Risk" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011.

A decline in market interest rates could also reduce our return on investments that do not support particular policy obligations. During periods of sustained lower interest rates, our recorded policy liabilities may not be sufficient to meet future policy obligations and may need to be strengthened, thereby reducing net income in the affected reporting period. Accordingly, declining interest rates may materially affect our results of operations, financial position and cash flows and significantly reduce our profitability.

Increases in market interest rates may also negatively affect our profitability. In periods of rapidly increasing interest rates, we may not be able to replace the assets in our general account with higher yielding assets needed to fund the

higher crediting rates necessary to keep our interest-sensitive products competitive. We therefore may have to accept a lower spread and thus lower profitability or face a decline in sales and greater loss of existing contracts and related assets. Increases in interest rates may cause increased surrenders and withdrawals of insurance products.

In periods of increasing interest rates, policy loans and surrenders and withdrawals of life insurance policies and annuity contracts may increase as contract holders seek to buy products with perceived higher returns. This process may lead to a flow of cash out of our businesses. These outflows may require investment assets to be sold at a time when the prices of those assets are lower because of the increase in market interest rates, which may result in realized investment

losses. A sudden demand among consumers to change product types or withdraw funds could lead us to sell assets at a loss to meet the demand for funds. Furthermore, unanticipated increases in withdrawals and termination may cause us to unlock our DAC and VOBA assets, which would reduce net income. An increase in market interest rates could also have a material adverse effect on the value of our investment portfolio, for example, by decreasing the estimated fair values of the fixed income securities that comprise a substantial portion of our investment portfolio. An increase in interest rates could also result in decreased fee income associated with a decline in the value of variable annuity account balances invested in fixed income funds.

Because the equity markets and other factors impact the profitability and expected profitability of many of our products, changes in equity markets and other factors may significantly affect our business and profitability.

The fee revenue that we earn on equity-based variable annuities and VUL insurance policies is based primarily upon account values. Because strong equity markets result in higher account values, strong equity markets positively affect our net income through increased fee revenue. Conversely, a weakening of the equity markets results in lower fee income and may have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and capital resources.

The increased fee revenue resulting from strong equity markets increases the expected gross profits (“EGPs”) from variable insurance products as do better than expected lapses, mortality rates and expenses. As a result, higher EGPs may result in lower net amortized costs related to DAC, DSI, VOBA, DFEL and changes in future contract benefits. However, a decrease in the equity markets, as well as worse than expected increases in lapses, mortality rates and expenses, depending upon their significance, may result in higher net amortized costs associated with DAC, DSI, VOBA, DFEL and changes in future contract benefits and may have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and capital resources. If we were to have unlocked our reversion to the mean (“RTM”) assumption in the corridor as of December 31, 2011, we would have recorded a favorable prospective unlocking of approximately \$175 million, pre-tax, for our Annuities segment, approximately \$20 million, pre-tax, for our Retirement Plan Services segment and approximately \$15 million, pre-tax, for our Life Insurance segment. For further information about our RTM process, see “Critical Accounting Policies and Estimates—DAC, VOBA, DSI and DFEL—Reversion to the Mean” in the Management’s Discussion and Analysis (“MD&A”) in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011.

Changes in the equity markets, interest rates and/or volatility affect the profitability of our products with guaranteed benefits; therefore, such changes may have a material adverse effect on our business and profitability.

Certain of our variable annuity products include guaranteed benefit riders. These include guaranteed death benefit (“GDB”), guaranteed withdrawal benefit (“GWB”) and guaranteed income benefit (“GIB”) riders. Our GWB, GIB and 4LATER® (a form of GIB rider) features have elements of both insurance benefits accounted for under the Financial Services—Insurance—Claim Costs and Liabilities for Future Policy Benefits Subtopic of the FASB ASC (“benefit reserves”) and embedded derivatives accounted for under the Derivatives and Hedging and the Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures Topics of the FASB ASC (“embedded derivative reserves”). We calculate the value of the embedded derivative reserve and the benefit reserves based on the specific characteristics of each guaranteed living benefit feature. The amount of reserves related to GDB for variable annuities is tied to the difference between the value of the underlying accounts and the GDB, calculated using a benefit ratio approach. The GDB reserves take into account the present value of total expected GDB payments, the present value of total expected GDB assessments over the life of the contract, claims paid to date and assessments to date. Reserves for our GIB and certain GWB with lifetime benefits are based on a combination of fair value of the underlying benefit and a benefit ratio approach that is based on the projected future payments in excess of projected future account values. The benefit ratio approach takes into account the present value of total expected GIB payments, the present value of total expected GIB assessments over the life of the contract, claims paid to date and assessments to date. The amount of reserves related to those GWB that do not have lifetime benefits is based on the fair value of the underlying benefit.

Both the level of expected payments and expected total assessments used in calculating the reserves not carried at fair value are affected by the equity markets. The liabilities related to fair value are impacted by changes in equity markets, interest rates and volatility. Accordingly, strong equity markets, increases in interest rates and decreases in volatility will generally decrease the reserves calculated using fair value. Conversely, a decrease in the equity markets along with a decrease in interest rates and an increase in volatility will generally result in an increase in the reserves calculated using fair value.

Increases in reserves would result in a charge to our earnings in the quarter in which the increase occurs. Therefore, we maintain a customized dynamic hedge program that is designed to mitigate the risks associated with income volatility around the change in reserves on guaranteed benefits. However, the hedge positions may not be effective to exactly offset the changes in the carrying value of the guarantees due to, among other things, the time lag between changes in their values and corresponding changes in the hedge positions, high levels of volatility in the equity markets and derivatives markets, extreme swings in interest rates, contract holder behavior different than expected, a strategic decision to under- or over-hedge in reaction to extreme market conditions or inconsistencies between economic and statutory reserving guidelines and divergence between the performance of the underlying funds and hedging indices. For example, for the years ended December 31, 2011, 2010 and 2009, we experienced a breakage on our variable annuity net derivatives results of \$(106) million, \$(27) million and \$103 million, respectively, pre-tax and before the associated amortization of DAC, VOBA, DSI and DFEL and changes in other contract holder funds and funds withheld reinsurance liabilities. Breakage is defined as the difference between the change in the value of the liabilities, excluding the amount related to the non-performance risk component, and the change in the fair value of the derivatives. Breakage can be positive or negative. The non-performance risk factor is required under the Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures Topic of the FASB ASC, which requires us to consider our own credit standing, which is not hedged, in the valuation of certain of these liabilities. A decrease in our own credit spread could cause the value of these liabilities to increase, resulting in a reduction to net income. Conversely, an increase in our own credit spread could cause the value of these liabilities to decrease, resulting in an increase to net income.

In addition, we remain liable for the guaranteed benefits in the event that derivative counterparties are unable or unwilling to pay, and we are also subject to the risk that the cost of hedging these guaranteed benefits increases, resulting in a reduction to net income. These, individually or collectively, may have a material adverse effect on net income, financial condition or liquidity.

Liquidity and Capital Position

Adverse capital and credit market conditions may affect our ability to meet liquidity needs, access to capital and cost of capital.

We need liquidity to pay our operating expenses, interest on our debt and dividends on our capital stock, to maintain our securities lending activities and to replace certain maturing liabilities. Without sufficient liquidity, we will be forced to curtail our operations, and our business will suffer. When considering our liquidity and capital position, it is important to distinguish between the needs of our insurance subsidiaries and the needs of the holding company. For our insurance and other subsidiaries, the principal sources of liquidity are insurance premiums and fees, annuity considerations and cash flow from our investment portfolio and assets, consisting mainly of cash or assets that are readily convertible into cash.

In the event that current resources do not satisfy our needs, we may have to seek additional financing. The availability of additional financing will depend on a variety of factors such as market conditions, the general availability of credit, the volume of trading activities, the overall availability of credit to the financial services industry, our credit ratings and credit capacity, as well as the possibility that customers or lenders could develop a negative perception of our long- or short-term financial prospects if we incur large investment losses or if the level of our business activity decreases due to a market downturn. Similarly, our access to funds may be impaired if regulatory authorities or rating agencies take negative actions against us. See "Item 7. MD&A—Review of Consolidated Financial Condition—Liquidity and Capital Resources—Sources of Liquidity and Cash Flows" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 for a description of our credit ratings. Our internal sources of liquidity may prove to be insufficient, and in such case, we may not be able to successfully obtain additional financing on favorable terms, or at all.

Disruptions, uncertainty or volatility in the capital and credit markets may also limit our access to capital required to operate our business, most significantly our insurance operations. Such market conditions may limit our ability to replace, in a timely manner, maturing liabilities; satisfy statutory capital requirements; generate fee income and market-related revenue to meet liquidity needs; and access the capital necessary to grow our business. As such, we may be forced to delay raising capital, issue shorter term securities than we prefer or bear an unattractive cost of capital which could decrease our profitability and significantly reduce our financial flexibility. Our results of operations, financial condition, cash flows and statutory capital position could be materially adversely affected by disruptions in the financial markets.

Because we are a holding company with no direct operations, the inability of our subsidiaries to pay dividends to us in sufficient amounts would harm our ability to meet our obligations.

We are a holding company and we have no direct operations. Our principal asset is the capital stock of our insurance subsidiaries. Our ability to meet our obligations for payment of interest and principal on outstanding debt obligations and to pay dividends to shareholders, repurchase our securities and pay corporate expenses depends primarily on the ability of our subsidiaries to pay dividends or to advance or repay funds to us. Under Indiana laws and regulations, our Indiana insurance subsidiaries, including The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company (“LNL”), our primary insurance subsidiary, may pay dividends to us without prior approval of the Indiana Insurance Commissioner (the “Commissioner”) up to a certain threshold, or must receive prior approval of the Commissioner to pay a dividend if such dividend, along with all other dividends paid within the preceding 12 consecutive months, exceed the statutory limitation. The current Indiana statutory limitation is the greater of 10% of the insurer’s contract holders’ surplus, as shown on its last annual statement on file with the Commissioner, or the insurer’s statutory net gain from operations for the prior calendar year.

In addition, payments of dividends and advances or repayment of funds to us by our insurance subsidiaries are restricted by the applicable laws of their respective jurisdictions requiring that our insurance subsidiaries hold a specified amount of minimum reserves in order to meet future obligations on their outstanding policies. These regulations specify that the minimum reserves shall be calculated to be sufficient to meet future obligations, after giving consideration to future required premiums to be received, and are based on certain specified mortality and morbidity tables, interest rates and methods of valuation, which are subject to change. In order to meet their claims-paying obligations, our insurance subsidiaries regularly monitor their reserves to ensure we hold sufficient amounts to cover actual or expected contract and claims payments. At times, we may determine that reserves in excess of the minimum may be needed to ensure sufficiency.

Changes in, or reinterpretations of, these laws can constrain the ability of our subsidiaries to pay dividends or to advance or repay funds to us in sufficient amounts and at times necessary to meet our debt obligations and corporate expenses. Requiring our insurance subsidiaries to hold additional reserves has the potential to constrain their ability to pay dividends to the holding company. See “Legislative, Regulatory and Tax—Changes to the calculation of reserves and attempts to mitigate the impact of Regulation XXX and Actuarial Guideline 38 may fail in whole or in part resulting in an adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations” in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 for additional information on potential changes in these laws.

The earnings of our insurance subsidiaries impact contract holders’ surplus. Lower earnings constrain the growth in our insurance subsidiaries’ capital, and therefore, can constrain the payment of dividends and advances or repayment of funds to us.

In addition, the amount of surplus that our insurance subsidiaries could pay as dividends is constrained by the amount of surplus they hold to maintain their financial strength ratings, to provide an additional layer of margin for risk protection and for future investment in our businesses. Notwithstanding the foregoing, we believe that our insurance subsidiaries have sufficient liquidity to meet their contract holder obligations and maintain their operations.

A decrease in the capital and surplus of our insurance subsidiaries may result in a downgrade to our credit and insurer financial strength ratings.

In any particular year, statutory surplus amounts and RBC ratios may increase or decrease depending on a variety of factors, including the amount of statutory income or losses generated by our insurance subsidiaries (which itself is sensitive to equity market and credit market conditions), the amount of additional capital our insurance subsidiaries

must hold to support business growth, changes in reserving requirements, such as AG38 and principles based reserving, our inability to secure capital market solutions to provide reserve relief, such as issuing letters of credit to support captive reinsurance structures, changes in equity market levels, the value of certain fixed-income and equity securities in our investment portfolio, the value of certain derivative instruments that do not get hedge accounting, changes in interest rates and foreign currency exchange rates, as well as changes to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners' RBC formulas. The RBC ratio is also affected by the product mix of the in-force book of business (i.e., the amount of business without guarantees is not subject to the same level of reserves as the business with guarantees). Most of these factors are outside of our control. Our credit and insurer financial strength ratings are significantly influenced by the statutory surplus amounts and RBC ratios of our insurance company subsidiaries. The RBC ratio of LNL is an important factor in the

determination of the credit and financial strength ratings of LNC and its subsidiaries. In addition, rating agencies may implement changes to their internal models that have the effect of increasing or decreasing the amount of statutory capital we must hold in order to maintain our current ratings. In addition, in extreme scenarios of equity market declines, the amount of additional statutory reserves that we are required to hold for our variable annuity guarantees may increase at a rate greater than the rate of change of the markets. Increases in reserves reduce the statutory surplus used in calculating our RBC ratios. To the extent that our statutory capital resources are deemed to be insufficient to maintain a particular rating by one or more rating agencies, we may seek to raise additional capital through public or private equity or debt financing, which may be on terms not as favorable as in the past. Alternatively, if we were not to raise additional capital in such a scenario, either at our discretion or because we were unable to do so, our financial strength and credit ratings might be downgraded by one or more rating agencies. For more information on risks regarding our ratings, see “Covenants and Ratings—A downgrade in our financial strength or credit ratings could limit our ability to market products, increase the number or value of policies being surrendered and/or hurt our relationships with creditors” below.

Assumptions and Estimates

Our reserves for future policy benefits and claims related to our current and future business as well as businesses we may acquire in the future may prove to be inadequate.

We establish and carry, as a liability, reserves based on estimates of how much we will need to pay for future benefits and claims. For our insurance products, we calculate these reserves based on many assumptions and estimates, including, but not limited to, estimated premiums we will receive over the assumed life of the policies, the timing of the events covered by the insurance policies, the lapse rate of the policies, the amount of benefits or claims to be paid and the investment returns on the assets we purchase with the premiums we receive.

The sensitivity of our statutory reserves and surplus established for our variable annuity base contracts and riders to changes in the equity markets will vary depending on the magnitude of the decline. The sensitivity will be affected by the level of account values relative to the level of guaranteed amounts, product design and reinsurance. Statutory reserves for variable annuities depend upon the cumulative equity market impacts on the business in force, and therefore, result in non-linear relationships with respect to the level of equity market performance within any reporting period.

The assumptions and estimates we use in connection with establishing and carrying our reserves are inherently uncertain. Accordingly, we cannot determine with precision the ultimate amount or the timing of the payment of actual benefits and claims or whether the assets supporting the policy liabilities will grow to the level we assume prior to payment of benefits or claims. If our actual experience is different from our assumptions or estimates, our reserves may prove to be inadequate in relation to our estimated future benefits and claims. Increases in reserves have a negative effect on income from operations in the quarter incurred.

If our businesses do not perform well and/or their estimated fair values decline or the price of our common stock does not increase, we may be required to recognize an impairment of our goodwill or to establish a valuation allowance against the deferred income tax asset, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

Goodwill represents the excess of the acquisition price incurred to acquire subsidiaries and other businesses over the fair value of their net assets as of the date of acquisition. As of December 31, 2011, we had a total of \$2.3 billion of goodwill on our Consolidated Balance Sheets, of which \$1.5 billion related to our Life Insurance segment and \$440 million related to our Annuities segment. We test goodwill at least annually for indications of value impairment with

consideration given to financial performance, mergers and acquisitions and other relevant factors. In addition, certain events, including a significant and adverse change in legal factors, accounting standards or the business climate, an adverse action or assessment by a regulator or unanticipated competition, would cause us to review the carrying amounts of goodwill for impairment. Impairment testing is performed based upon estimates of the fair value of the “reporting unit” to which the goodwill relates. As of December 31, 2011, we recorded a goodwill impairment of \$747 million, primarily related to our Life Insurance segment. Subsequent reviews of goodwill could result in impairment of goodwill, and such write downs could have a material adverse effect on our net income and book value, but will not affect the statutory capital of our insurance subsidiaries. For more information on goodwill, see Note 10 and “Critical Accounting Policies and Estimates—Goodwill and Other Intangible Assets” in the MD&A in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011.

Deferred income tax represents the tax effect of the differences between the book and tax basis of assets and liabilities. Deferred tax assets are assessed periodically by management to determine if they are realizable. As of December 31, 2011, we had a deferred tax asset of \$2.5 billion. Factors in management's determination include the performance of the business, including the ability to generate capital gains from a variety of sources and tax planning strategies. If, based on available information, it is more likely than not that the deferred income tax asset will not be realized, then a valuation allowance must be established with a corresponding charge to net income. Such valuation allowance could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial position.

The determination of the amount of allowances and impairments taken on our investments is highly subjective and could materially impact our results of operations or financial position.

The determination of the amount of allowances and impairments varies by investment type and is based upon our periodic evaluation and assessment of known and inherent risks associated with the respective asset class. Such evaluations and assessments are revised as conditions change and new information becomes available. Management updates its evaluations regularly and reflects changes in allowances and impairments in operations as such evaluations are revised. There can be no assurance that our management has accurately assessed the level of impairments taken and allowances reflected in our financial statements. Furthermore, additional impairments may need to be taken or allowances provided for in the future. Historical trends may not be indicative of future impairments or allowances.

We regularly review our available-for-sale ("AFS") securities for declines in fair value that we determine to be other-than-temporary. For an equity security, if we do not have the ability and intent to hold the security for a sufficient period of time to allow for a recovery in value, we conclude that an other-than-temporary-impairment ("OTTI") has occurred, and the amortized cost of the equity security is written down to the current fair value, with a corresponding change to realized gain (loss) on our Consolidated Statements of Income (Loss). When assessing our ability and intent to hold the equity security to recovery, we consider, among other things, the severity and duration of the decline in fair value of the equity security as well as the cause of decline, a fundamental analysis of the liquidity, business prospects and overall financial condition of the issuer.

For a debt security, if we intend to sell a security or it is more likely than not we will be required to sell a debt security before recovery of its amortized cost basis and the fair value of the debt security is below amortized cost, we conclude that an OTTI has occurred and the amortized cost is written down to current fair value, with a corresponding charge to realized loss on our Consolidated Statements of Income. If we do not intend to sell a debt security or it is not more likely than not we will be required to sell a debt security before recovery of its amortized cost basis but the present value of the cash flows expected to be collected is less than the amortized cost of the debt security (referred to as the credit loss), we conclude that an OTTI has occurred and the amortized cost is written down to the estimated recovery value with a corresponding charge to realized loss on our Consolidated Statements of Income (Loss), as this is also deemed the credit portion of the OTTI. The remainder of the decline to fair value is recorded in other comprehensive income (loss) ("OCI") to unrealized OTTI on AFS securities on our Consolidated Statements of Stockholders' Equity, as this is considered a noncredit (i.e., recoverable) impairment. Net OTTI recognized in net income (loss) was \$118 million, \$152 million and \$392 million, pre-tax, for the years ended December 31, 2011, 2010 and 2009, respectively. The portion of OTTI recognized in OCI for the years ended December 31, 2011 and 2010 was \$47 million and \$88 million, pre-tax, respectively.

Related to our unrealized losses, we establish deferred tax assets for the tax benefit we may receive in the event that losses are realized. The realization of significant realized losses could result in an inability to recover the tax benefits and may result in the establishment of valuation allowances against our deferred tax assets. Realized losses or impairments may have a material adverse impact on our results of operations and financial position.

Our valuation of fixed maturity, equity and trading securities may include methodologies, estimations and assumptions which are subject to differing interpretations and could result in changes to investment valuations that may materially adversely affect our results of operations or financial condition.

Fixed maturity, equity and trading securities and short-term investments, which are reported at fair value on our Consolidated Balance Sheets, represented the majority of our total cash and invested assets. Pursuant to the Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures Topics of the FASB ASC, we have categorized these securities into a three-level hierarchy, based on the priority of the inputs to the respective valuation technique. The fair value hierarchy gives the highest priority

to quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3).

The determination of fair values in the absence of quoted market prices is based on valuation methodologies, securities we deem to be comparable and assumptions deemed appropriate given the circumstances. The fair value estimates are made at a specific point in time, based on available market information and judgments about financial instruments, including estimates of the timing and amounts of expected future cash flows and the credit standing of the issuer or counterparty. Factors considered in estimating fair value include coupon rate, maturity, estimated duration, call provisions, sinking fund requirements, credit rating, industry sector of the issuer and quoted market prices of comparable securities. The use of different methodologies and assumptions may have a material effect on the estimated fair value amounts.

During periods of market disruption, including periods of significantly increasing/decreasing or high/low interest rates, rapidly widening credit spreads or illiquidity, it may be difficult to value certain securities if trading becomes less frequent and/or market data becomes less observable. There may be certain asset classes that were in active markets with significant observable data that become illiquid due to the current financial environment. In such cases, more securities may fall to Level 3 and thus require more subjectivity and management judgment. As such, valuations may include inputs and assumptions that are less observable or require greater estimation, as well as valuation methods which are more sophisticated or require greater estimation, thereby resulting in values which may be less than the value at which the investments may be ultimately sold. Further, rapidly changing and unprecedented credit and equity market conditions could materially impact the valuation of securities as reported within our consolidated financial statements and the period-to-period changes in value could vary significantly. Decreases in value may have a material adverse effect on our results of operations or financial condition.

Significant adverse mortality experience may result in the loss of, or higher prices for, reinsurance.

We reinsure a significant amount of the mortality risk on fully underwritten, newly issued, individual life insurance contracts. We regularly review retention limits for continued appropriateness and they may be changed in the future. If we were to experience adverse mortality or morbidity experience, a significant portion of that would be reimbursed by our reinsurers. Prolonged or severe adverse mortality or morbidity experience could result in increased reinsurance costs, and ultimately, reinsurers not willing to offer coverage. If we are unable to maintain our current level of reinsurance or purchase new reinsurance protection in amounts that we consider sufficient, we would either have to be willing to accept an increase in our net exposures or revise our pricing to reflect higher reinsurance premiums. If this were to occur, we may be exposed to reduced profitability and cash flow strain or we may not be able to price new business at competitive rates.

Catastrophes may adversely impact liabilities for contract holder claims and the availability of reinsurance.

Our insurance operations are exposed to the risk of catastrophic mortality, such as a pandemic, an act of terrorism, natural disaster or other event that causes a large number of deaths or injuries. Significant influenza pandemics have occurred three times in the last century, but the likelihood, timing or severity of a future pandemic cannot be predicted. Additionally, the impact of climate change could cause changes in weather patterns, resulting in more severe and more frequent natural disasters such as forest fires, hurricanes, tornados, floods and storm surges. In our group insurance operations, a localized event that affects the workplace of one or more of our group insurance customers could cause a significant loss due to mortality or morbidity claims. These events could cause a material adverse effect on our results of operations in any period and, depending on their severity, could also materially and adversely affect our financial condition.

The extent of losses from a catastrophe is a function of both the total amount of insured exposure in the area affected by the event and the severity of the event. Pandemics, natural disasters and man-made catastrophes, including terrorism, may produce significant damage in larger areas, especially those that are heavily populated. Claims resulting from natural or man-made catastrophic events could cause substantial volatility in our financial results for any fiscal quarter or year and could materially reduce our profitability or harm our financial condition. Also, catastrophic events could harm the financial condition of our reinsurers and thereby increase the probability of default on reinsurance recoveries. Accordingly, our ability to write new business could also be affected.

Consistent with industry practice and accounting standards, we establish liabilities for claims arising from a catastrophe only after assessing the probable losses arising from the event. We cannot be certain that the liabilities we have established or applicable reinsurance will be adequate to cover actual claim liabilities, and a catastrophic event or multiple catastrophic events could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

Operational Matters

Our enterprise risk management policies and procedures may leave us exposed to unidentified or unanticipated risk, which could negatively affect our businesses or result in losses.

We have devoted significant resources to develop our enterprise risk management policies and procedures and expect to continue to do so in the future. Nonetheless, our policies and procedures to identify, monitor and manage risks may not be fully effective. Many of our methods of managing risk and exposures are based upon our use of observed historical market behavior or statistics based on historical models. As a result, these methods may not predict future exposures, which could be significantly greater than the historical measures indicate, such as the risk of pandemics causing a large number of deaths. Other risk management methods depend upon the evaluation of information regarding markets, clients, catastrophe occurrence or other matters that is publicly available or otherwise accessible to us, which may not always be accurate, complete, up-to-date or properly evaluated. Management of operational, legal and regulatory risks requires, among other things, policies and procedures to record properly and verify a large number of transactions and events, and these policies and procedures may not be fully effective.

We face a risk of non-collectibility of reinsurance, which could materially affect our results of operations.

We follow the insurance practice of reinsuring with other insurance and reinsurance companies a portion of the risks under the policies written by our insurance subsidiaries (known as “ceding”). As of December 31, 2011, we ceded \$331.7 billion of life insurance in force to reinsurers for reinsurance protection. Although reinsurance does not discharge our subsidiaries from their primary obligation to pay contract holders for losses insured under the policies we issue, reinsurance does make the assuming reinsurer liable to the insurance subsidiaries for the reinsured portion of the risk. As of December 31, 2011, we had \$6.5 billion of reinsurance receivables from reinsurers for paid and unpaid losses, for which they are obligated to reimburse us under our reinsurance contracts. Of this amount, \$2.8 billion related to the sale of our reinsurance business to Swiss Re in 2001 through an indemnity reinsurance agreement. Swiss Re has funded a trust to support this business. The balance in the trust changes as a result of ongoing reinsurance activity and was \$2.2 billion as of December 31, 2011. Furthermore, approximately \$1.0 billion of the Swiss Re treaties are funds withheld structures where we have a right of offset on assets backing the reinsurance receivables.

The balance of the reinsurance is due from a diverse group of reinsurers. The collectibility of reinsurance is largely a function of the solvency of the individual reinsurers. We perform annual credit reviews on our reinsurers, focusing on, among other things, financial capacity, stability, trends and commitment to the reinsurance business. We also require assets in trust, letters of credit or other acceptable collateral to support balances due from reinsurers not authorized to transact business in the applicable jurisdictions. Despite these measures, a reinsurer’s insolvency, inability or

unwillingness to make payments under the terms of a reinsurance contract, especially Swiss Re, could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

Competition for our employees is intense, and we may not be able to attract and retain the highly skilled people we need to support our business.

Our success depends, in large part, on our ability to attract and retain key people. Intense competition exists for the key employees with demonstrated ability, and we may be unable to hire or retain such employees. The unexpected loss of services of one or more of our key personnel could have a material adverse effect on our operations due to their skills, knowledge of our business, their years of industry experience and the potential difficulty of promptly finding qualified replacement employees. We compete with other financial institutions primarily on the basis of our products, compensation, support services and financial position. Sales in our businesses and our results of operations and financial condition could be materially adversely affected if we are unsuccessful in attracting and retaining key employees, including financial advisors, wholesalers and other employees, as well as independent distributors of our products.

We may not be able to protect our intellectual property and may be subject to infringement claims.

We rely on a combination of contractual rights and copyright, trademark, patent and trade secret laws to establish and protect our intellectual property. Although we use a broad range of measures to protect our intellectual property rights, third parties may infringe or misappropriate our intellectual property. We may have to litigate to enforce and protect our copyrights, trademarks, patents, trade secrets and know-how or to determine their scope, validity or enforceability, which represents a diversion of resources that may be significant in amount and may not prove successful. Additionally, complex legal and factual determinations and evolving laws and court interpretations make the scope of protection afforded our intellectual property uncertain, particularly in relation to our patents. While we believe our patents provide us with a competitive advantage, we cannot be certain that any issued patents will be interpreted with sufficient breadth to offer meaningful protection. In addition, our issued patents may be successfully challenged, invalidated, circumvented or found unenforceable so that our patent rights would not create an effective competitive barrier. The loss of intellectual property protection or the inability to secure or enforce the protection of our intellectual property assets could have a material adverse effect on our business and our ability to compete.

We also may be subject to costly litigation in the event that another party alleges our operations or activities infringe upon another party's intellectual property rights. Third parties may have, or may eventually be issued, patents that could be infringed by our products, methods, processes or services. Any party that holds such a patent could make a claim of infringement against us. We may also be subject to claims by third parties for breach of copyright, trademark, trade secret or license usage rights. Any such claims and any resulting litigation could result in significant liability for damages. If we were found to have infringed a third-party patent or other intellectual property rights, we could incur substantial liability, and in some circumstances could be enjoined from providing certain products or services to our customers or utilizing and benefiting from certain methods, processes, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets or licenses, or alternatively could be required to enter into costly licensing arrangements with third parties, all of which could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

Our information systems may experience interruptions or breaches in security.

Our information systems are critical to the operation of our business. We collect, process, maintain, retain and distribute large amounts of personal financial and health information and other confidential and sensitive data about our customers in the ordinary course of our business. Our business therefore depends on our customers' willingness to entrust us with their personal information. Any failure, interruption or breach in security could result in disruptions to our critical systems and adversely affect our customer relationships. While we employ a robust and tested information security program, there can be no assurance that any such failure, interruption or security breach will not occur or, if any does occur, that it can be sufficiently remediated. The occurrence of any such failure, interruption or security breach of our systems could damage our reputation, result in a loss of customer business, subject us to additional regulatory scrutiny, or expose us to civil litigation and financial liability.

Covenants and Ratings

A downgrade in our financial strength or credit ratings could limit our ability to market products, increase the number or value of policies being surrendered and/or hurt our relationships with creditors.

Nationally recognized rating agencies rate the financial strength of our principal insurance subsidiaries and rate our debt. Ratings are not recommendations to buy our securities. Each of the rating agencies reviews its ratings periodically, and our current ratings may not be maintained in the future.

Our financial strength ratings, which are intended to measure our ability to meet contract holder obligations, are an important factor affecting public confidence in most of our products and, as a result, our competitiveness. A

downgrade of the financial strength rating of one of our principal insurance subsidiaries could affect our competitive position in the insurance industry by making it more difficult for us to market our products as potential customers may select companies with higher financial strength ratings and by leading to increased withdrawals by current customers seeking companies with higher financial strength ratings. This could lead to a decrease in fees as net outflows of assets increase, and therefore, result in lower fee income. Furthermore, sales of assets to meet customer withdrawal demands could also result in losses, depending on market conditions. The interest rates we pay on our borrowings are largely dependent on our credit ratings. A

downgrade of our debt ratings could affect our ability to raise additional debt, including bank lines of credit, with terms and conditions similar to our current debt, and accordingly, likely increase our cost of capital.

All of our ratings and the ratings of our principal insurance subsidiaries are subject to revision or withdrawal at any time by the rating agencies, and therefore, no assurance can be given that our principal insurance subsidiaries or we can maintain these ratings. See “Item 1. Business—Financial Strength Ratings” and “Item 7. MD&A—Review of Consolidated Financial Condition—Liquidity and Capital Resources—Sources of Liquidity and Cash Flows” in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 for a description of our ratings.

We will be required to pay interest on our capital securities with proceeds from the issuance of qualifying securities if we fail to achieve capital adequacy or net income and stockholders’ equity levels.

As of December 31, 2011, we had approximately \$1.2 billion in principal amount of capital securities outstanding. All of the capital securities contain covenants that require us to make interest payments in accordance with an alternative coupon satisfaction mechanism (“ACSM”) if we determine that one of the following triggers exists as of the 30th day prior to an interest payment date, or the “determination date”:

1. LNL’s RBC ratio is less than 175% (based on the most recent annual financial statement filed with the State of Indiana); or
2. (i) The sum of our consolidated net income for the four trailing fiscal quarters ending on the quarter that is two quarters prior to the most recently completed quarter prior to the determination date is zero or negative, and (ii) our consolidated stockholders’ equity (excluding accumulated OCI and any increase in stockholders’ equity resulting from the issuance of preferred stock during a quarter), “adjusted stockholders’ equity,” as of (x) the most recently completed quarter and (y) the end of the quarter that is two quarters before the most recently completed quarter, has declined by 10% or more as compared to the quarter that is ten fiscal quarters prior to the last completed quarter, or the “benchmark quarter.”

The ACSM would generally require us to use commercially reasonable efforts to satisfy our obligation to pay interest in full on the capital securities with the net proceeds from sales of our common stock and warrants to purchase our common stock with an exercise price greater than the market price. We would have to utilize the ACSM until the trigger events above no longer existed, and, in the case of test 2 above, until our adjusted stockholders’ equity amount increased or declined by less than 10% as compared to the adjusted stockholders’ equity at the end of the benchmark quarter for each interest payment date as to which interest payment restrictions were imposed by test 2 above.

If we were required to utilize the ACSM and were successful in selling sufficient shares of common stock or warrants to satisfy the interest payment, we would dilute the current holders of our common stock. Furthermore, while a trigger event is occurring and if we do not pay accrued interest in full, we may not, among other things, pay dividends on or repurchase our capital stock. Our failure to pay interest pursuant to the ACSM will not result in an event of default with respect to the capital securities, nor will a nonpayment of interest, unless it lasts for ten consecutive years, although such breaches may result in monetary damages to the holders of the capital securities.

The calculations of RBC, net income (loss) and adjusted stockholders’ equity are subject to adjustments and the capital securities are subject to additional terms and conditions as further described in supplemental indentures filed as exhibits to our Forms 8-K filed on March 13, 2007 and May 17, 2006.

Certain blocks of our insurance business purchased from third-party insurers under indemnity reinsurance agreements may require us to place assets in trust, secure letters of credit or return the business, if the financial strength ratings and/or capital ratios of certain insurance subsidiaries are not maintained at specified levels.

Under certain indemnity reinsurance agreements, one of our insurance subsidiaries, Lincoln Life & Annuity Co. of New York (“LLANY”), provides 100% indemnity reinsurance for the business assumed, however, the third-party insurer, or the “cedent,” remains primarily liable on the underlying insurance business. Under these types of agreements, as of December 31, 2011, we held statutory reserves of \$3.1 billion. These indemnity reinsurance arrangements require that our subsidiary, as the reinsurer, maintain certain insurer financial strength ratings and capital ratios. If these ratings or capital ratios are not maintained, depending upon the reinsurance agreement, the cedent may recapture the business, or

require us to place assets in trust or provide letters of credit at least equal to the relevant statutory reserves. Under the largest indemnity reinsurance arrangement, we held \$2.1 billion of statutory reserves as of December 31, 2011. LLANY must maintain an A.M. Best financial strength rating of at least B+, an S&P financial strength rating of at least BB+ and a Moody's financial strength rating of at least Ba1, as well as maintain an RBC ratio of at least 160% or an S&P capital adequacy ratio of 100%, or the cedent may recapture the business. Under two other arrangements, by which we established approximately \$875 million of statutory reserves, LLANY must maintain an A.M. Best financial strength rating of at least B++, an S&P financial strength rating of at least BBB- and a Moody's financial strength rating of at least Baa3. One of these arrangements also requires LLANY to maintain an RBC ratio of at least 185%, or an S&P capital adequacy ratio of 115%. Each of these arrangements may require LLANY to place assets in trust equal to the relevant statutory reserves. As of December 31, 2011, LLANY's RBC ratio exceeded the required ratio. See "Item 1. Business—Financial Strength Ratings" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 for a description of our financial strength ratings.

If the cedent recaptured the business, LLANY would be required to release reserves and transfer assets to the cedent. Such a recapture could adversely impact our future profits. Alternatively, if LLANY established a security trust for the cedent, the ability to transfer assets out of the trust could be severely restricted, thus negatively impacting our liquidity.

Investments

Some of our investments are relatively illiquid and are in asset classes that have been experiencing significant market valuation fluctuations.

We hold certain investments that may lack liquidity, such as privately placed fixed maturity securities, mortgage loans, policy loans and other limited partnership interests. These asset classes represented 21% of the carrying value of our total cash and invested assets as of December 31, 2011.

If we require significant amounts of cash on short notice in excess of normal cash requirements or are required to post or return collateral in connection with our investment portfolio, derivatives transactions or securities lending activities, we may have difficulty selling these investments in a timely manner, be forced to sell them for less than we otherwise would have been able to realize, or both.

The reported value of our relatively illiquid types of investments, our investments in the asset classes described in the paragraph above and, at times, our high quality, generally liquid asset classes, do not necessarily reflect the lowest current market price for the asset. If we were forced to sell certain of our assets in the current market, there can be no assurance that we would be able to sell them for the prices at which we have recorded them and we might be forced to sell them at significantly lower prices.

We invest a portion of our invested assets in investment funds, many of which make private equity investments. The amount and timing of income from such investment funds tends to be uneven as a result of the performance of the underlying investments, including private equity investments. The timing of distributions from the funds, which depends on particular events relating to the underlying investments, as well as the funds' schedules for making distributions and their needs for cash, can be difficult to predict. As a result, the amount of income that we record from these investments can vary substantially from quarter to quarter. Recent equity and credit market volatility may reduce investment income for these types of investments.

Defaults on our mortgage loans and write downs of mortgage equity may adversely affect our profitability.

Our mortgage loans face default risk and are principally collateralized by commercial properties. The performance of our mortgage loan investments may fluctuate in the future. In addition, some of our mortgage loan investments have balloon payment maturities. An increase in the default rate of our mortgage loan investments could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

Further, any geographic or sector exposure in our mortgage loans may have adverse effects on our investment portfolios and consequently on our consolidated results of operations or financial condition. While we seek to mitigate this risk by having a broadly diversified portfolio, events or developments that have a negative effect on any particular

geographic region or sector may have a greater adverse effect on the investment portfolios to the extent that the portfolios are exposed.

The difficulties faced by other financial institutions could adversely affect us.

We have exposure to many different industries and counterparties, and routinely execute transactions with counterparties in the financial services industry, including brokers and dealers, commercial banks, investment banks and other institutions. Many of these transactions expose us to credit risk in the event of default of our counterparty. In addition, with respect to secured transactions, our credit risk may be exacerbated when the collateral held by us cannot be realized upon or is liquidated at prices not sufficient to recover the full amount of the loan or derivative exposure due to it. We also may have exposure to these financial institutions in the form of unsecured debt instruments, derivative transactions and/or equity investments. These parties may default on their obligations to us due to bankruptcy, lack of liquidity, downturns in the economy or real estate values, operational failure, corporate governance issues or other reasons. A further downturn in the U.S. and other economies could result in increased impairments. There can be no assurance that any such losses or impairments to the carrying value of these assets would not materially and adversely affect our business and results of operations.

Our requirements to post collateral or make payments related to declines in market value of specified assets may adversely affect our liquidity and expose us to counterparty credit risk.

Many of our transactions with financial and other institutions, including settling futures positions, specify the circumstances under which the parties are required to post collateral. The amount of collateral we may be required to post under these agreements may increase under certain circumstances, which could adversely affect our liquidity. In addition, under the terms of some of our transactions, we may be required to make payments to our counterparties related to any decline in the market value of the specified assets.

Our investments are reflected within our consolidated financial statements utilizing different accounting bases, and, accordingly, there may be significant differences between cost and fair value that are not recorded in our consolidated financial statements.

Our principal investments are in fixed maturity and equity securities, mortgage loans on real estate, policy loans, short-term investments, derivative instruments, limited partnerships and other invested assets. The carrying value of such investments is as follows:

- Fixed maturity and equity securities are classified as AFS, except for those designated as trading securities, and are reported at their estimated fair value. The difference between the estimated fair value and amortized cost of such securities (i.e., unrealized investment gains and losses) is recorded as a separate component of OCI, net of adjustments to DAC, contract holder related amounts and deferred income taxes;
- Fixed maturity and equity securities designated as trading securities, which in certain cases support reinsurance arrangements, are recorded at fair value with subsequent changes in fair value recognized in realized gain (loss). However, in certain cases, the trading securities support reinsurance arrangements. In those cases, offsetting the changes to fair value of the trading securities are corresponding changes in the fair value of the embedded derivative liability associated with the underlying reinsurance arrangement. In other words, the investment results for the trading securities, including gains and losses from sales, are passed directly to the reinsurers through the contractual terms of the reinsurance arrangements. These types of securities represent 60% of our trading securities;
- Short-term investments include investments with remaining maturities of one year or less, but greater than three months, at the time of acquisition and are stated at amortized cost, which approximates fair value;
- Mortgage loans on real estate are carried at unpaid principal balances, adjusted for any unamortized premiums or discounts and deferred fees or expenses, net of valuation allowances;

- Policy loans are carried at unpaid principal balances;
- Real estate joint ventures and other limited partnership interests are carried using the equity method of accounting; and
- Other invested assets consist principally of derivatives with positive fair values. Derivatives are carried at fair value with changes in fair value reflected in income from non-qualifying derivatives and derivatives in fair value

hedging relationships. Derivatives in cash flow hedging relationships are reflected as a separate component of OCI.

Investments not carried at fair value on our consolidated financial statements, principally, mortgage loans, policy loans and real estate, may have fair values which are substantially higher or lower than the carrying value reflected on our consolidated financial statements. In addition, unrealized losses are not reflected in net income unless we realize the losses by either selling the security at below amortized cost or determine that the decline in fair value is deemed to be other-than-temporary (i.e., impaired). Each of such asset classes is regularly evaluated for impairment under the accounting guidance appropriate to the respective asset class.

Competition

Intense competition could negatively affect our ability to maintain or increase our profitability.

Our businesses are intensely competitive. We compete based on a number of factors, including name recognition, service, the quality of investment advice, investment performance, product features, price, perceived financial strength and claims-paying and credit ratings. Our competitors include insurers, broker-dealers, financial advisors, asset managers and other financial institutions. A number of our business units face competitors that have greater market share, offer a broader range of products or have higher financial strength or credit ratings than we do.

In recent years, there has been substantial consolidation and convergence among companies in the financial services industry resulting in increased competition from large, well-capitalized financial services firms. Many of these firms also have been able to increase their distribution systems through mergers or contractual arrangements. Furthermore, larger competitors may have lower operating costs and an ability to absorb greater risk while maintaining their financial strength ratings, thereby allowing them to price their products more competitively. We expect consolidation to continue and perhaps accelerate in the future, thereby increasing competitive pressure on us.

Our sales representatives are not captive and may sell products of our competitors.

We sell our annuity and life insurance products through independent sales representatives. These representatives are not captive, which means they may also sell our competitors' products. If our competitors offer products that are more attractive than ours, or pay higher commission rates to the sales representatives than we do, these representatives may concentrate their efforts in selling our competitors' products instead of ours.

SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

The Lincoln National Corporation 1997 Incentive Compensation Plan (the "ICP Plan") was established by our Board of Directors on May 13, 1997, subject to shareholder approval, and approved by our shareholders at their Annual Meeting held on May 15, 1997. The Plan was subsequently amended and restated as approved by shareholders at their Annual Meetings on May 10, 2001, May 12, 2005, May 10, 2007 and May 14, 2009. The last version of the ICP Plan is referred to below as the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan.

Described below are the major features of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan. The statements contained in this prospectus concerning the Plan are brief summaries, qualified in their entirety by reference to the terms of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan itself. Eligible participants and their beneficiaries may examine copies of the Plan upon request at our principal executive offices.

1. Purpose of the Plan. Our Board of Directors believes that attracting and retaining key employees is essential to our growth and success. In addition, the Board believes that our long-term success is enhanced by a competitive and comprehensive compensation program, which may include tailored incentives designed to motivate and reward such persons for outstanding service, including awards that link compensation to applicable measures of our performance and the creation of shareholder value. These awards will enable us to attract and retain key employees and enable such persons to acquire and/or increase their proprietary interest in us and thereby align their interests with the interests of our shareholders. In addition, the Board has concluded that the Compensation Committee, or Committee, of the Board should be given sufficient flexibility to provide for annual and long-term incentive awards contingent on performance.

2. Types of Awards. The terms of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan provide for grants of stock options, stock appreciation rights (“SARs”), restricted stock, restricted stock units, deferred stock units, other stock-related awards, and performance or annual incentive awards that may be settled in cash, stock, or other property (“Awards”).

3. Shares Subject to the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan; Annual Per-Person Limitations.

Under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, the total number of shares of our Common Stock reserved and available for delivery to participants in connection with Awards is 44,126,512 of which 33,206,508 shares were either issued or reserved for issuance under outstanding Awards at December 31, 2011. Shares that may be issued in payment of Awards, other than options and SARs, granted on or after May 14, 2009 shall be counted against the remaining shares at a ratio of 1.63-to-1. The total number of shares of Common Stock with respect to which incentive stock options (“ISOs”), none of which are currently outstanding, may be granted shall not exceed 2,000,000. The shares available for issuance under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan will vary at any point in time due to new Award grants and expirations, forfeitures and cancellations of outstanding Awards as discussed in the following paragraph. Any shares of Common Stock delivered under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan shall consist of authorized and unissued shares.

The 2009 Amended and Restated Plan contains rules to permit all awards to be properly counted and not counted twice. These rules will apply to shares previously authorized under any other plan at the time they become subject to the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan. Forfeited, terminated or expired awards of shares, as well as awards settled in cash without issuing any shares, will become available for future awards using the same counting formula described above depending on their date of grant. With respect to stock settled SARs and options, the full issuance of shares to settle such Awards will count against shares available under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, that is at a ratio of 1-to-1.

In addition, the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan imposes individual limitations on the amount of certain Awards in order to comply with Section 162(m) of the Code. Under these limitations, during any fiscal year the number of options, SARs, shares of restricted stock, units of deferred stock, shares of Common Stock issued as a bonus or in lieu of other obligations, and other stock-based Awards granted to any one participant shall not exceed 2,000,000 shares for each type of such Award, subject to adjustment in certain circumstances. The maximum amount that may be earned as an annual incentive award or other cash Award (payable currently or on a deferred basis) in any fiscal year by any one participant is \$8,000,000, and the maximum amount that may be earned as a performance award or other cash Award (payable currently or on a deferred basis) in respect of a performance period by any one participant is \$8,000,000.

The Committee is authorized to adjust the number and kind of shares subject to the aggregate share limitations and annual limitations under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan and subject to outstanding Awards (including adjustments to exercise prices and number of shares of options and other affected terms of Awards) in the event that a dividend or other distribution (whether in cash, shares, or other property), recapitalization, forward or reverse split, reorganization, merger, consolidation, spin-off, combination, repurchase, or share exchange, or other similar corporate transaction or event affects the Common Stock so that an adjustment is appropriate. The Committee is also authorized to adjust performance conditions and other terms of Awards in response to these kinds of events or in response to changes in applicable laws, regulations, or accounting principles.

Except as described under “Restricted Stock Awards” below, the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan does not impose any restriction on the resale of shares of our Common Stock acquired pursuant to a grant under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan. However, any of our “affiliates” (defined in Rule 405 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “1933 Act”) to include persons who directly or indirectly, through one or more intermediaries, control, or are controlled by, or are under common control with, us) may not use this Prospectus to offer and sell shares of Common Stock they

acquire under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan. They may, however, sell such shares:

- (1) pursuant to an effective registration statement under the 1933 Act;
- (2) in compliance with Rule 144 under the 1933 Act; or
- (3) in a transaction otherwise exempt from the registration requirements of that 1933 Act.

Each participant who is the beneficial owner of at least 10% of the outstanding shares of the our Common Stock and each participant who is one of our directors or policy-making officers subject to Section 16(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “1934 Act”), which requires such persons to disgorge to us any “profits” resulting from a certain non-exempt sales and purchases (or purchases and sales) of shares of the Common Stock within a six-month period. For such participants, sales of shares of Common Stock occurring within six months of the grant of an option or the grant of a restricted stock award may result in such Section 16(b) liability, unless one or both of those transactions are exempt, as described below in more detail.

Pursuant to Rule 16b-3 of the 1934 Act, provided the committee that administers the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan consists solely of at least two “Non-Employee Directors” (as defined in rules promulgated under Section 16), the grant of an option, SAR, a restricted stock award, or other award to a participant subject to Section 16(b) will not be deemed, for purposes of Section 16(b), to be a purchase of the shares that underlie the option, award or right for purposes of determining whether a participant is liable to the us for any profits derived from the purchase and sale of Common Stock.

In addition, if at least six months have elapsed between the award of an option, SAR, a restricted stock award, or other award, and the disposition of the underlying Common Stock, no purchase of Common Stock would be deemed to have occurred under Section 16(b) for purposes of determining whether a participant is liable to us for any profits derived from the purchase and sale of Common Stock.

It is our intent that the grant of any Awards to or other transaction by a participant who is subject to Section 16 of the Exchange Act shall be exempt under Rule 16b-3 (except for transactions acknowledged in writing to be non-exempt by such participant). Accordingly, if any provision of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan or any Award agreement does not comply with the requirements of Rule 16b-3 as then applicable to any such transaction, unless the participant shall have acknowledged in writing that a transaction pursuant to such provision is to be non-exempt, such provision shall be construed or deemed amended to the extent necessary to conform to the applicable requirements of Rule 16b-3 so that such participant shall avoid liability under Section 16(b) of the Exchange Act.

However, even if a transaction is exempt under Section 16(b), the general prohibition of federal and state securities laws on trading securities while in possession of material non-public information concerning the issuer shall continue to apply.

4. Eligibility. Our executive officers and other officers and employees, agents and brokers, and those of our subsidiaries, including any such person who may also be one of our directors, are eligible to be granted Awards under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan.

5. Administration. The 2009 Amended and Restated Plan will be administered by the Committee. Subject to the terms and conditions of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, the Committee is authorized to interpret the provisions of the plan, select participants, determine the type and number of Awards to be granted and the number of shares of Common Stock to which Awards will relate, specify times at which Awards will be exercisable or settleable (including performance conditions that may be required as a condition thereof), set other terms and conditions of such Awards, prescribe forms of Award agreements, adopt, amend and rescind rules and regulations relating to the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, and make all other determinations that may be necessary or advisable for the administration of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan. The Committee may, in its discretion, convert any Award or the value of any Award under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, subject to applicable laws and regulations, into Deferred Stock Units which will be administered under our plans relating to deferred compensation. The 2009 Amended and Restated Plan provides that Committee members shall not be personally liable, and shall be fully indemnified, in connection with any action, determination, or interpretation taken or made in good faith under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan.

6. Stock Options and SARs. The Committee is authorized to grant stock options, including both ISOs (as defined below) that can result in potentially favorable tax treatment to the participant and non-qualified stock options (i.e. , options not qualifying as ISOs), and SARs entitling the participant to receive the excess of the fair market value of a share of Common Stock on the date of exercise over the grant price of the SAR. The exercise price per share subject to an option and the grant price of a SAR is determined by the Committee, but must not be less than the fair market value of a share of Common Stock on the date of grant. Under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, unless otherwise determined by the Committee, the fair market value of the Common Stock is the closing price of a share of Common Stock, as quoted on the composite

transactions table on the NYSE, on the date of grant.

Incentive Stock Options or ISO means any option intended to be and designated as an incentive stock option within the meaning of Section 422 of the Code or any successor provision thereto. The terms of any ISO granted under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan is intended to comply in all respects with the provisions of Code Section 422. No term of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan relating to ISOs (including any SAR in tandem therewith) may be interpreted, amended or altered, nor may any discretion or authority granted under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan be exercised so as to disqualify either the Plan or any ISO under Code Section 422, unless the Participant has first requested the change that will result in the disqualification.

The maximum term of each option or SAR, the times at which each option or SAR will be exercisable, and provisions requiring forfeiture of unexercised options or SARs at or following termination of employment generally are fixed by the Committee, except no option or SAR may have a term exceeding ten years. Options may be exercised by payment of the exercise price in cash, Common Stock or outstanding Awards having a fair market value equal to the exercise price, as the Committee may determine from time to time. Methods of exercise and settlement and other terms of the SARs are determined by the Committee. To date, we have only granted SARs settleable exclusively in cash. The Committee may include a provision in an option permitting the grant of a new option when payment of the exercise price of an option is made in shares of Common Stock. However, as discussed below, the exercise price of an option may not be reduced (except as a result of a change in our capitalization) without shareholder approval. See "Other Terms of Awards; No Repricing," below.

7. Restricted Stock, Restricted Stock Units and Deferred Stock Units. The Committee is authorized to grant restricted stock, restricted stock units and deferred stock units. Restricted stock is a grant of Common Stock which may not be sold or disposed of, and which may be forfeited in the event of certain terminations of employment and/or failure to meet certain performance requirements, prior to the end of a restricted period specified by the Committee. A participant granted restricted stock generally has all of the rights of a shareholder, including the right to vote the shares and to receive dividends thereon, unless otherwise determined by the Committee. A restricted stock unit, or RSU, represents a phantom share of our Common Stock that does not include the right to vote the shares or receive dividends thereon. An Award of deferred stock units is credited to a bookkeeping reserve account in accordance with the terms of the Company's plans relating to deferred compensation. Once credited to the account, deferred stock units are governed by the terms of the plans relating to deferred compensation or any successor plan. Such an Award confers upon a participant the right to receive shares at the end of a specified deferral period, subject to possible forfeiture of the Award in the event of certain terminations of employment and/or failure to meet certain performance requirements prior to the end of a specified restricted period (which restricted period need not extend for the entire duration of the deferral period). Prior to settlement, an Award of RSUs or deferred stock units carries no voting or dividend rights or other rights associated with share ownership, although dividend equivalents may be granted, which are paid out only upon settlement of the award.

8. Bonus Stock and Awards in Lieu of Cash Obligations. The Committee is authorized to grant shares as a bonus free of restrictions, or to grant shares or other Awards in lieu of obligations to pay cash under other plans or compensatory arrangements, subject to such terms as the Committee may specify.

9. Other Stock-Based Awards. The 2009 Amended and Restated Plan authorizes the Committee to grant Awards that are denominated or payable in, valued by reference to, or otherwise based on or related to shares. Such Awards might include convertible or exchangeable debt securities, other rights convertible or exchangeable into shares, purchase rights for shares, Awards with value and payment contingent upon our performance or any other factors designated by the Committee, and Awards valued by reference to the book value of shares or the value of securities of or the performance of specified subsidiaries. The Committee determines the terms and conditions of such Awards, including consideration to be paid to exercise Awards in the nature of purchase rights, the period during which Awards will be

outstanding, and forfeiture conditions and restrictions on Awards.

10. Performance Awards, Including Annual Incentive Awards. The right of a participant to exercise or receive a grant or settlement of an Award, and the timing thereof, may be subject to such performance conditions as may be specified by the Committee. In addition, the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan authorizes specific annual incentive awards, which represent a conditional right to receive cash, shares or other Awards upon achievement of pre-established performance goals during a specified one-year period. Performance awards and annual incentive awards granted to persons the

Committee expects will, for the year in which a deduction arises, be among our executive officers named in our proxy statement, will, if so intended by the Committee, be subject to provisions that should qualify such Awards as “performance-based compensation” not subject to the limitation on tax deductibility by us under Code Section 162(m).

The performance goals to be achieved as a condition of payment or settlement of a performance award or annual incentive award will consist of (i) one or more business criteria and (ii) a targeted level or levels of performance with respect to each such business criterion. In the case of performance awards intended to meet the requirements of Code Section 162(m), the business criteria used must be one of those specified in the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, although for other participants the Committee may specify any other criteria. The business criteria specified in the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan are, as defined by the Committee: (1) earnings (total or per share); (2) revenues or growth in revenues; (3) cash flow or cash flow return on investment; (4) assets, return on assets, growth in assets, return on investment, capital or return on capital, return on equity, or shareholder equity (total or per share); (5) economic value added or insurance-imbedded value added; (6) operating margin; (7) net income or growth in net income (total or per share), pretax earnings or growth in pretax earnings (total or per share), pretax earnings before interest, depreciation and amortization, pretax operating earnings after interest expense and before incentives, and extraordinary or special items; (8) operating earnings or income from operations; (9) statutory income; (10) total shareholder return; (11) profit margins; (12) premiums and fees, or growth in premiums and fees, including service fees; (13) book value; (14) membership and growth in membership; (15) market share or change in market share; (16) stock price or change in stock price; (17) market capitalization, change in market capitalization, or return on market value; (18) economic value added or market value added; (19) cash flow or change in cash flow; (20) expense ratios, expense savings, budgets, product cost reduction through advanced technology, or other expense management measures; (21) productivity ratios or other measures of operating efficiency or effectiveness; (22) risk based capital ratio; (23) ratio of claims or loss costs to revenues; (24) satisfaction measures: customer, provider, or employee; (25) implementation or completion of critical projects or processes; (26) product development, product release schedules, new product innovation, brand recognition/acceptance; (27) any of the above goals as compared to Standard & Poor’s 500 Stock Index or a group of comparator companies; and (28) any criteria comparable to those listed above, including metrics designed to measure progress toward achieving the company’s strategic intent of becoming the retirement income security company of choice for its clients, that shall be approved by the Committee.

In granting annual incentive or performance awards, the Committee may establish unfunded award “pools,” the amounts of which will be based upon the achievement of a performance goal or goals using one or more of the business criteria described in the preceding paragraph. During the first 90 days of a fiscal year or performance period, the Committee will determine who will potentially receive annual incentive or performance awards for that fiscal year or performance period, either out of the pool or otherwise. After the end of each fiscal year or performance period, the Committee will determine the amount, if any, of the pool, the maximum amount of potential annual incentive or performance awards payable to each participant in the pool, and the amount of any potential annual incentive or performance award otherwise payable to a participant. The Committee may, in its discretion, determine that the amount payable as an annual incentive or performance award will be increased or reduced from the amount of any potential Award, but may not exercise discretion to increase any such amount intended to qualify as performance-based compensation under Code Section 162(m).

Subject to the requirements of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, the Committee will determine other performance award and annual incentive award terms, including the required levels of performance with respect to the business criteria, the corresponding amounts payable upon achievement of such levels of performance, termination and forfeiture provisions, and the form of settlement. Because of the discretionary nature of the awards that may be made under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, the benefits available under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan are not readily determinable. However, the Awards that may be made under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan are subject to the limitations discussed above under “Shares Subject to the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan; Annual Per Person Limitations.”

11. Other Terms of Awards; No Repricing. In general, Awards may be settled in the form of cash, Common Stock, other Awards, or other property, in the discretion of the Committee. The Committee may require or permit participants to defer the settlement of all or part of an Award in accordance with such terms and conditions as the Committee may establish, including payment or crediting of interest or dividend equivalents on deferred amounts, and the crediting of earnings, gains, and losses based on deemed investment of deferred amounts in specified investment vehicles. The Committee is authorized to place cash, shares, or other property in trusts or make other arrangements to provide for payment of our obligations under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan. The Committee may condition any payment

relating to an Award on the withholding of taxes and may provide that a portion of any shares or other property to be distributed will be withheld (or previously acquired shares or other property surrendered by the participant) to satisfy withholding and other tax obligations. Awards granted under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan generally may not be pledged or otherwise encumbered and are not transferable except by will or by the laws of descent and distribution, or to a designated beneficiary upon the participant's death, except that the Committee may, in its discretion, permit transfers for estate planning or other purposes.

Awards under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan are generally granted without a requirement that the participant pay consideration in the form of cash or property for the grant (as distinguished from the exercise), except to the extent required by law. The Committee may, however, grant Awards in exchange for other Awards under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, awards under our other plans, or other rights to payment from us, and may grant Awards in addition to and in tandem with such other Awards, awards, or rights as well.

Unless the Award agreement specifies otherwise, the Committee may cancel or rescind Awards if the participant fails to comply with certain noncompetition, confidentiality or intellectual property covenants. For instance, Awards may be canceled or rescinded if the participant engages in competitive activity while employed by us or within a specified period following termination of employment. We may, in our discretion, in any individual case provide for waiver in whole or in part of compliance with the noncompetition, confidentiality or intellectual property covenants.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, no option that has been granted under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan may be repriced, replaced or regranted through cancellation, including in exchange for cash, or otherwise modified without shareholder approval (except in connection with adjustments permitted under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan), if the effect would be to reduce the exercise price for the shares underlying the option.

12. Acceleration of Vesting. The Committee may, in its discretion, accelerate the exercisability, the lapsing of restrictions, or the expiration of deferral or vesting periods of any Award, and such accelerated exercisability, lapse, expiration and vesting will occur automatically in the case of our Change of Control, except to the extent otherwise determined by the Committee at the date of grant. In addition, the Committee may provide that the performance goals relating to any performance-based award will be deemed to have been met upon the occurrence of any Change of Control. Upon the occurrence of a Change of Control, except to the extent set forth in the Award agreement, options will become fully vested and exercisable and restrictions on restricted stock and deferred stock units will lapse. "Change of Control" is defined to include a variety of events, including the acquisition by certain individuals or entities of twenty percent or more of our outstanding Common Stock, significant changes in our board of directors, certain reorganizations, mergers and consolidations involving us, and the sale or disposition of all or substantially all of our consolidated assets.

13. Amendment and Termination of the Amended and Restated Plan. The Board of Directors, or the Committee acting pursuant to authority delegated to it by the Board, may amend, alter, suspend, discontinue, or terminate the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan or the Committee's authority to grant Awards without further shareholder approval, except shareholder approval must be obtained for any amendment or alteration if required by law or regulation or under the rules of any stock exchange or automated quotation system on which the shares are then listed or quoted. Shareholder approval will not be deemed to be required under laws or regulations, such as those relating to ISOs, that condition favorable treatment of participants on such approval, although the Board may, in its discretion, seek shareholder approval in any circumstance in which it deems such approval advisable. Thus, shareholder approval will not necessarily be required for amendments that might increase the cost of the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan or broaden eligibility. Unless earlier terminated by the Board, the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan will terminate at such time as no shares remain available for issuance under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan, and we have no further rights or obligations with respect to outstanding Awards under the 2009 Amended and Restated Plan.

14. Federal Income Tax Implications of the Amended and Restated Plan.

The following is a brief description of the federal income tax consequences generally arising with respect to Awards under the Amended and Restated Plan. In view of the individual nature of tax consequences, each participant should consult his or her tax advisor for more specific information, including the effect of applicable federal, state and other tax laws.

Under present law the federal income tax consequences of grants and awards under the Amended and Restated Plan are generally as follows:

Non-Qualified Stock Options. The grant of a non-qualified stock option should not result in taxable income to the participant at the time of grant. On exercise of a non-qualified stock option, the participant will normally realize taxable ordinary income equal to any excess of the fair market value of the shares at the time of exercise over the option price of the shares. At the time this ordinary income is recognized by the participant, we will be entitled to a corresponding deduction. Upon the disposition of the shares acquired upon exercise of a non-qualified stock option, the difference between the amount received for the shares and the basis (i.e., fair market value of the shares on exercise of the option) will be treated as long-term or short-term capital gain or loss, depending on the holding period.

ISOs. The tax treatment of ISOs is complex. We have not granted any ISOs in over 10 years. Should we grant ISOs, we will provide affected optionees with a summary of the federal tax implications.

SARs. The grant of a SAR should not result in taxable income to the participant at the time of grant. On exercise of a SAR, the participant will realize taxable ordinary income equal to the cash and fair market value of any shares received. At the time the participant recognizes ordinary income on the exercise of a SAR, we will be entitled to a corresponding deduction. Upon the disposition of any shares acquired under a SAR, the difference between the amount received for the shares and the fair market value of the shares as of the date of exercise of the SAR will be treated as long-term or short-term capital gain or loss, depending on the holding period.

Restricted Stock. The grant of restricted stock should not automatically result in taxable income to the participant. Instead, the participant will normally realize taxable ordinary income when the restrictions on the shares lapse in an amount equal to the fair market value of the shares on that date. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a participant may elect (pursuant to Section 83(b) of the Code), within 30 days after the date of a restricted stock grant, to be taxed on the value of the shares as of the date of grant. If the participant subsequently forfeits the shares, the participant will not be entitled to a deduction. At the time the participant recognizes ordinary income with respect to restricted stock, we will be entitled to a corresponding deduction. Upon disposition of the shares after restrictions lapse, the difference between the amount received and the fair market value of the shares on the vesting date (or on the date of grant if the participant made the election described above) will be treated as long-term or short-term capital gain or loss, depending on the holding period.

Dividends paid on restricted stock received by the participant prior to the lapse of restrictions will be taxable as ordinary income to the participant, and we will be allowed a corresponding deduction unless the participant made the Section 83(b) election described above. If the election was made, dividends actually paid on restricted stock will be taxable as dividends and we will not be allowed a corresponding deduction.

Unrestricted Stock Grants including Long Term Incentive Program Payouts. Generally, a participant will be subject to tax, and we will receive a corresponding deduction, with respect to a distribution of an unrestricted stock grant or Long Term Incentive Program payout when the Common Stock and any cash are paid to the participant. The amount of taxable income a participant recognizes and our deduction will equal the amount of cash and the fair market value of the Common Stock paid out.

Code Section 409A. To the extent that any Award under the Plan is considered a deferral of compensation subject to Code section 409A, the Plan shall be construed and administered in accordance with Code section 409A and in compliance with the applicable IRS guidance, including good faith compliance with any proposed IRS rules.

PARTICIPANTS ELECTING TO SATISFY A WITHHOLDING OBLIGATION BY SURRENDERING SHARES OF COMPANY COMMON STOCK ARE STRONGLY URGED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAX ADVISORS.

15. Miscellaneous. The 2009 Amended and Restated Plan is not qualified under Section 401(a) of the Code and is not subject to any of the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended.

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WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information and documents with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC. You may read and copy any document we file with the SEC at:

- public reference room maintained by the SEC in: Washington, D.C. (100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549). Copies of such materials can be obtained from the SEC's public reference section at prescribed rates. You may obtain information on the operation of the public reference rooms by calling the SEC at (800) SEC-0330, or
- the SEC website located at www.sec.gov.

This Prospectus is one part of a Registration Statement filed on Form S-3 with the SEC under the Securities Act. This Prospectus does not contain all of the information set forth in the Registration Statement and the exhibits and schedules to the Registration Statement. For further information concerning us and the securities, you should read the entire Registration Statement and the additional information described under "Documents Incorporated By Reference" below. The registration statement has been filed electronically and may be obtained in any manner listed above. Any statements contained herein concerning the provisions of any document are not necessarily complete, and, in each instance, reference is made to the copy of such document filed as an exhibit to the Registration Statement or otherwise filed with the SEC. Each such statement is qualified in its entirety by such reference.

Information about us is also available on our web site at www.lfg.com. This URL and the SEC's URL above are intended to be inactive textual references only. Such information on our or the SEC's web site is not a part of this Prospectus.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The following documents have been filed with the SEC in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), and are incorporated by reference in this prospectus:

- Our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011;
- Our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 18 and March 29, 2012; and
- The description of our Common Stock contained in Form 10 filed with the SEC on April 28, 1969 (File No. 1-6028), including any amendments or reports filed for the purpose of updating that description.

Each document filed subsequent to the date of this Registration Statement pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 and 15(d) of the Exchange Act, prior to the filing of a post-effective amendment which indicates that all securities offered have been sold or which deregisters all securities then remaining unsold, shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement and to be a part hereof from the date of the filing of such documents. Any statement contained in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein by reference shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this Registration Statement to the extent that a statement contained herein (or in any other subsequently filed document which also is or is deemed to be incorporated by reference herein) modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as

so modified or superseded, to constitute part of this Registration Statement.

We will provide without charge to each person to whom this prospectus is delivered, including any beneficial owner, upon the written or oral request of such person, a copy of the documents incorporated by reference as described above (other than exhibits to such documents unless such exhibits are specifically incorporated by reference into such documents), copies of all documents constituting part of the prospectus for the Plan, and copies of the Plan. Please direct your oral or written request to:

Charles A. Brawley, III
Senior Vice President, Associate General Counsel & Secretary
Lincoln National Corporation
150 N. Radnor Chester Road
Radnor, PA 19087
484-583-1400

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of Lincoln National Corporation appearing in Lincoln National Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 (including schedules included therein) and the effectiveness of Lincoln National Corporation's internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2011, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in their reports thereon, included therein, and incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements are incorporated herein by reference in reliance upon such reports given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities offered hereby will be passed upon for us by Marcie J. Weber, Esq., Vice President and Senior Counsel of Lincoln National Corporation. As of the date of this Registration Statement, Ms. Weber beneficially owns approximately 3,534 shares of our Common Stock including options exercisable within sixty (60) days of the date of the Registration Statement.

PART II

INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS

Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution

Set forth below are estimates of all expenses incurred or to be incurred by us in connection with the issuance and distribution of our Common Stock to be registered, other than underwriting discounts and commissions of which there are none.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Registration fees | \$ 14,653 |
| Photocopying and Printing | 5,000 |
| Accounting fees | 10,000 |
| State blue sky fees and expenses | -0- |
| TOTAL | \$ 29,653 |

Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers

Our bylaws, pursuant to authority contained in the Indiana Business Corporation Law and the Indiana Insurance Law, respectively, provide for the indemnification of our officers, directors and employees against the following:

- reasonable expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by them in connection with the defense of any action, suit or proceeding to which they are made or threatened to be made parties (including those brought by, or on behalf of us) if they are successful on the merits or otherwise in the defense of such proceeding except with respect to matters as to which they are adjudged liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duties to their respective corporations.
- reasonable costs of judgments, settlements, penalties, fines and reasonable expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred with respect to, any action, suit or proceeding, if the person's conduct was in good faith and the person reasonably believed that his/her conduct was in our best interest. In the case of a criminal proceeding, the person must also have reasonable cause to believe his/her conduct was lawful.

Indiana Law requires that a corporation, unless limited by its articles of incorporation, indemnify its directors and officers against reasonable expenses incurred in the successful defense of any proceeding arising out of their serving as a director or officer of the corporation.

No indemnification or reimbursement will be made to an individual judged liable to us, unless a court determines that in spite of a judgment of liability to the corporation, the individual is reasonably entitled to indemnification, but only to the extent that the court deems proper. Additionally, if an officer, director or employee does not meet the standards of conduct described above, such individual will be required to repay us for any advancement of expenses it had previously made.

In the case of directors, a determination as to whether indemnification or reimbursement is proper will be made by a majority of the disinterested directors or, if it is not possible to obtain a quorum of directors not party to or interested in the proceeding, then by a committee thereof or by special legal counsel. In the case of individuals who are not

directors, such determination will be made by the chief executive officer of the respective corporation, or, if the chief executive officer so directs, in the manner it would be made if the individual were a director of the corporation.

Such indemnification may apply to claims arising under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended. Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted for our directors, officers or controlling persons pursuant to the foregoing provisions, we have been informed that in the opinion of the SEC such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and therefore unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by us of expenses incurred or paid by one of our directors, officers or controlling persons in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director,

officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, we will, unless in the opinion of our counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by us is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of the issue by the court.

We maintain a program of insurance under which our directors and officers are insured, subject to specified exclusions and deductible and maximum amounts, against actual or alleged errors, misstatements, misleading statements, acts or omissions, or neglect or breach of duty while acting in their respective capacities for us.

The indemnification and advancement of expenses provided for in our bylaws does not exclude or limit any other rights to indemnification and advancement of expenses that a person may be entitled to other agreements, shareholders' and board resolutions and our articles of incorporation.

Item 16. Exhibits.

The exhibits filed with this Registration Statement are listed in the Exhibit Index, which is incorporated herein by reference.

Item 17. Undertakings.

The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(d) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act to any purchaser:

- (i) Each prospectus filed by a Registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and
- (ii) Each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5) or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii) or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by Section 10(a) of the Securities Act shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier of the date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which the prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof. Provided, however, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date.

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

- (i) Any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of an undersigned Registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;
- (ii) Any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of an undersigned Registrant or used or referred to by an undersigned Registrant;

- (iii) The portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about an undersigned Registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of an undersigned Registrant; and
- (iv) Any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by an undersigned Registrant to the purchaser.

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

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

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the Registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3, and has duly caused this Registration Statement on Form S-3 to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Radnor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, on the 30th day of April, 2011.

LINCOLN NATIONAL CORPORATION

By: /s/ Randal J. Freitag
Randal J. Freitag, Executive Vice
President and Chief Financial Officer

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this Registration Statement has been signed below by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

| Signature | Title | Date |
|--|--|----------------|
| Dennis R. Glass* Dennis R. Glass | President and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer) and a Director | April 30, 2012 |
| /s/ Randal J. Freitag Randal J. Freitag | Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial Officer) | April 30, 2012 |
| /s/Douglas N. Miller Douglas N. Miller | Senior Vice President and Chief Accounting Officer (Principal Accounting Officer) | April 30, 2012 |
| William J. Avery* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| William H. Cunningham* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| George W. Henderson, III* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| Eric G. Johnson* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| Gary C. Kelly* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| M. Leanne Lachman* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| Michael F. Mee* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| William Porter Payne* | Director | April 30, 2012 |

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| | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------|
| Patrick S. Pittard* | Director | April 30, 2012 |
| Isaiah Tidwell* | Director | April 30, 2012 |

*By: /s/ Charles A. Brawley, III
Charles A. Brawley, III, Attorney-in-Fact
(Pursuant to Powers of Attorney)

INDEX TO EXHIBITS

- 3.1 Restated Articles of Incorporation of LNC are incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 of LNC's Form 8-K (File No. 1-6028) filed with the SEC on August 17, 2010.
- 3.2 Articles of Amendment to the Restated Articles of Incorporation of LNC dated May 26, 2011, are incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 of LNC's Form 8-K (File No. 1-6028) filed with the SEC on ay 31, 2011
- 3.3 Amended and Restated Bylaws of LNC (effective May 31, 2011) are incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.3 of LNC's Form 10-Q (File No. 1-6028) for the quarter ended June 30, 2011.
- 10.1 Lincoln National Corporation 2009 Amended and Restated Incentive Compensation Plan (effective May 14, 2009) is incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4 to LNC's Proxy Statement (File No. 1-6028) filed with the SEC on April 9, 2009.
- 5 Opinion of Marcie J. Weber, Esq., as to the legality of the securities being registered.
- 23.1 Consent of Ernst & Young LLP, Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm.
- 23.2 Consent of Marcie J. Weber, Esq., is contained in Exhibit 5 (included in Exhibit 5).
- 24 Powers of Attorney.