

Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc.
Form S-3
December 24, 2013

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on December 24, 2013
Registration No. 333-

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

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

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Delaware | HERITAGE - CRYSTAL CLEAN, INC. | 26-0351454 |
| (State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization) | (Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter) | (I.R.S. Employer Identification Number) |

2175 Point Boulevard, Suite 375
Elgin, IL 60123
(847) 836-5670

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of Registrant's principal executive offices)
Joseph Chalhoub
President and Chief Executive Officer
Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc.
2175 Point Boulevard, Suite 375
Elgin, IL 60123
(847) 836-5670

(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of agent for service)

Copy to:
Heidi Steele
McDermott Will & Emery LLP
227 W. Monroe, Suite 4700
Chicago, IL 60606

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time following the effectiveness 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. t

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

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

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

If 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, 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.

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer
 Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered(1)(2) | Amount to be Registered | Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit (3) | Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price (3) | Amount of Registration Fee |
|--|-------------------------|--|---|----------------------------|
| Primary Offering | | | | |
| Common Stock | | | | |
| Preferred Stock | | | | |
| Warrants to Purchase Common Stock or Preferred Stock | | | | |
| Depository Shares (4) | | | | |
| Stock Purchase Contracts | | | | |
| Stock Purchase Units | | | | |
| Rights Units(5) | | | | |
| Total Primary Offering | \$100,000,000 | | \$100,000,000 | |
| Total | \$100,000,000 | | \$100,000,000 | \$12,880 (6) |

(1) This registration statement relates to such indeterminate number or amount of shares of common stock, preferred stock, warrants, depository shares, stock purchase contracts, stock purchase units, rights, and units of the Registrant as may from time to time be issued or sold at indeterminate prices, in U.S. Dollars or the equivalent thereof denominated in foreign currencies or units, and rights of two or more foreign currencies or composite currencies (such as the Euro). In no event will the maximum aggregate offering price of all shares of common stock, preferred stock, warrants, stock purchase contracts, stock purchase units, and rights issued or sold pursuant to this registration statement exceed \$100,000,000. These securities may be sold separately, together or as units with other securities registered hereby.

(2) This registration statement also registers such indeterminate amounts of securities as may be issued upon conversion of, or in exchange for, the securities registered and pursuant to Rule 416(a) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), such indeterminate number of shares of common stock as may be issued from time to time upon conversion or exchange as a result of stock splits, stock dividends, or similar transactions. The proposed maximum offering price per security and the proposed maximum aggregate offering price per class of security will be determined from time to time in connection with the issuance by the Registrant of the securities registered hereunder and is not specified as to each class of security pursuant to General Instruction II.D. of Form S-3 under the Securities Act.

(3) Represents depository shares, evidenced by depository receipts, issued pursuant to a deposit agreement. In the event the Registrant issues fractional interests in shares of the preferred stock registered hereunder, depository receipts will be distributed to purchasers of such fractional interests, and such shares of preferred stock will be

issued to a depository under the terms of a deposit agreement.

- (5) Each unit will be issued under a unit agreement and will represent an interest in two or more equity securities, which may or may not be separable from one another.
 - (6) Calculated pursuant to Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act previously filed.
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The Registrant hereby amends this registration statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the Registrant shall file a further amendment that specifically states that this registration statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 or until this registration statement shall become effective on such date as the Securities and Exchange Commission, acting pursuant to Section 8(a), may determine.

The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not sell these securities or accept an offer to buy these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED DECEMBER 24, 2013

PROSPECTUS
HERITAGE-CRYSTAL CLEAN, INC.
\$100,000,000
Common Stock
Preferred Stock
Warrants
Depositary Shares
Stock Purchase Contracts
Stock Purchase Units
Rights
Units

From time to time, we may sell up to an aggregate of \$100,000,000 of any combination of the securities described in this prospectus. We will specify the terms of any offering of securities by us in a prospectus supplement.

You should read this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and the information incorporated by reference herein or therein carefully before you invest.

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully consider the risk factors described in the applicable prospectus supplement and certain of our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, as described under "Risk Factors" on page 5.

This prospectus may not be used to offer or sell any securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement. Our common stock is quoted and traded on The NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol "HCCI." On December 19, 2013, the last reported sale price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market was \$19.16. The applicable prospectus supplement will contain information, where applicable, as to any other listing on The NASDAQ Global Market or any securities market or exchange of the securities covered by the prospectus supplement.

The securities may be offered directly by us to investors, to or through underwriters or dealers or through agents. If any underwriters are involved in the sale of any securities offered by this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, their names, and any applicable purchase price, fee, commission or discount arrangement between or among them, and any applicable over-allotment options, will be set forth, or will be calculable from the information set forth, in the applicable prospectus supplement. The price to the public of such securities and the net proceeds we expect to receive from such sale will also be set forth in a prospectus supplement.

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

The date of this prospectus is , 2013

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, utilizing a “shelf” registration process. Under this shelf process, we may sell the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with additional information described under the heading “Where You Can Find More Information.” You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information other than the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. We are not making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. The information contained in this prospectus speaks only as of the date of this prospectus and the information in the documents incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus speaks only as of the respective dates those documents were filed with the SEC. To the extent that any statement that we make in a prospectus supplement is inconsistent with statements made in this prospectus or a document that is incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference in this prospectus, the statements made in this prospectus will be deemed modified or superseded by those made in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms the “Company,” “we,” “us,” and “our” refer to Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc. We have filed or incorporated by reference exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part. You should read the exhibits carefully for provisions that may be important to you.

HERITAGE-CRYSTAL CLEAN, INC.

Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc. (herein collectively referred to as “we”, “us”, “our”, or “Company”) provides parts cleaning, containerized waste management, used oil collection, vacuum truck services, and antifreeze recycling and owns and operates a used oil re-refinery. We are the second largest provider of full-service parts cleaning and hazardous and

non-hazardous waste services to small and mid-sized customers in both the manufacturing and vehicle maintenance sectors in North America, and we have the second largest used oil re-refining capacity in North America. We operate our business through our Environmental Services and Oil Business segments which are described below.

Environmental Services Segment

The Environmental Services segment consists of our parts cleaning, containerized waste management, vacuum truck service, and antifreeze recycling activities. Our services help our customers manage their used chemicals and liquid and solid wastes, while also helping to minimize their regulatory burdens. Many of these substances are subject to extensive and complex regulations, and mismanagement can result in citations, penalties, and substantial direct costs, both to the service provider and also to the generator. We allow our customers to focus more on their core business and devote fewer resources to industrial and hazardous waste management and, more specifically, the related administrative burdens.

We have adopted innovative approaches in our Environmental Services segment to minimize the regulatory burdens for our customers and have made “ease of use” of our services and products a priority. Our company has implemented two different programs whereby our customers' used solvent may be excluded from the EPA's definition of hazardous waste. In our non-hazardous program, we provide our customers an alternative parts cleaning solvent not included in the definition of hazardous waste due to its increased flashpoint (the minimum temperature at which vapors from the solvent will ignite when tested under specified laboratory conditions). In our product reuse program, we sell used solvent as an ingredient for use in the manufacture of asphalt roofing materials. In addition to our service programs for hazardous waste, we also offer a water-based cleaning solution that is not included in the EPA's definition of hazardous waste.

Oil Business Segment

The Oil Business segment consists of our used oil collection and used oil re-refining activities. Through used oil re-refining, we recycle used oil into high quality lubricating base oil and byproducts, and we are a supplier to firms that produce and market finished lubricants. We are in the process of expanding the annual input capacity of our used oil re-refinery. It currently has an input capacity of approximately 60 million gallons of used oil feedstock per year with an expected annualized production of about 36 million gallons of lubricating base oil when operating at full capacity. We are currently feeding the re-refinery with a combination of used oil collected from our customers and used oil that we purchase from third parties.

Our History

The history of our business activity dates back to the late 1980s, when Heritage Environmental Services established a division to concentrate on the service needs of smaller customers. This division, known as Crystal Clean, began providing parts cleaning and used oil collection services to customers in Indianapolis, Indiana and gradually expanded to several other cities in the Midwest. During the 1990s, the Crystal Clean division expanded into markets in Texas and Louisiana as the result of a business venture with a major branded motor oil company. By the late 1990s, the Crystal Clean division was offering services to small to mid-sized customers in roughly a dozen metropolitan areas. In 1999, the parent of Heritage Environmental Services and Joseph Chalhoub, our Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer, agreed to form a new company, Heritage-Crystal Clean, LLC ("HCC LLC"), and to contribute the business assets of the Crystal Clean division to this new company. Mr. Chalhoub invested in the new Company and recruited a team of seasoned industry professionals to join our company and implement plans for growth.

The Company was incorporated under the laws of the state of Delaware on June 13, 2007. From mid 1999 through June 12, 2007, the business of the Company was conducted by HCC LLC and its affiliates. In March 2008, the Company completed a reorganization and an initial public offering. In connection with the reorganization and public offering, HCC LLC became a subsidiary of the Company. Our principal executive office is located in Elgin, Illinois.

RISK FACTORS

Before you invest in our securities, in addition to the other information, documents, or reports included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and in any prospectus supplement, you should carefully consider the risk factors set forth in the section entitled “Risk Factors” in any prospectus supplement as well as in “Part I, Item 1A. Risk Factors” in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K and in “Part II, Item 1A. Risk Factors” in our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q filed subsequent to such Form 10-K, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus and any prospectus supplement in their entirety, as the same may be updated from time to time by our future filings under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”). Each of the risks described in these sections and documents could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects, and the market price of our shares and any other securities we may issue.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

In addition to historical information, this prospectus contains, and documents incorporated herein by reference contain, forward-looking statements and are based on current management expectations that involve substantial risks and uncertainties, which could cause actual results to differ materially from the results expressed in, or implied by, these forward-looking statements. These statements can be identified by the fact that they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts. They use words such as “aim,” “anticipate,” “believe,” “could,” “estimate,” “expect,” “intend,” “may,” “project,” “should,” “will be,” “will continue,” “will likely result,” “would” and other words and terms of similar meaning in conjunction with a discussion of future or estimated operating or financial performance. You should read statements that contain these words carefully, because they discuss our future expectations, contain projections of our future results of operations or of our financial position or state other “forward-looking” information.

The factors listed under “Risk Factors,” as well as any cautionary language in this prospectus, or incorporated herein by reference, provide examples of risks, uncertainties, and events that may cause our actual results to differ materially from the expectations or estimates we describe in our forward-looking statements. Although we believe that our expectations are based on reasonable assumptions, actual results may differ materially from those in the forward-looking statements as a result of various factors, including, but not limited to, those described under the heading “Risk Factors” and elsewhere in this prospectus or incorporated herein by reference.

Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this prospectus. We do not have any intention, and do not undertake, to update any forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances arising after the date of this prospectus, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise. As a result of these risks and uncertainties, readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on the forward-looking statements included in this prospectus or that may be made elsewhere from time to time by, or on behalf of, us. All forward-looking statements attributable to us are expressly qualified by these cautionary statements.

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

The following table sets forth our ratio of earnings to fixed charges for the periods indicated:

| | Third Quarter Ended | Fiscal Year Ended | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------|-------|-------|------|
| | September 7, 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 |
| Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges | 10.27 | 4.44 | 4.76 | 18.94 | 11.26 | 3.17 |

For purposes of computing these ratios, earnings consists of pre-tax income from continuing operations plus fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest expense, capitalized interest, and estimated interest within rental expense. The Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges is calculated by dividing earnings by the sum of the fixed charges.

For further information on these ratios, see Exhibit 12.1, “Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges,” filed herewith.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise indicated in a prospectus supplement, the net proceeds from the sale of the securities by Heritage Crystal - Clean will be used for general corporate purposes including, but not limited to, additional re-refining capacity and potential acquisitions.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK AND PREFERRED STOCK

The following summary is a description of the material terms and provisions of our common stock and preferred stock. The following description of the terms of our common stock and preferred stock is not meant to be complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to our certificate of incorporation and bylaws, each as amended to date. To find out where copies of these documents can be obtained, see “Where to Obtain More Information.”

Our authorized capital stock consists of 22,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, and 500,000 shares of undesignated preferred stock, par value \$0.01 per share. As of December 19, 2013, there were 18,459,934 shares of our common stock issued and outstanding and no shares of preferred stock issued and outstanding. As of December 19, 2013,

there were 580,014 shares of common stock reserved for issuance upon the exercise of outstanding stock options. As of December 19, 2013, our common stock was held of record by approximately 341 stockholders.

Common Stock

Holders of common stock are entitled to one vote per share in the election of directors and on all other matters on which stockholders are entitled or permitted to vote. Holders of common stock are not entitled to cumulative voting rights. Subject to the terms of any outstanding series of preferred stock, the holders of common stock are entitled to dividends in amounts and at times as may be declared by the Board of Directors out of funds legally available for that purpose. Upon liquidation or dissolution, holders of common stock are entitled to share ratably in all net assets available for distribution to stockholders, after payment in full to creditors and payment of any liquidation preferences to holders of preferred stock. Except as provided in the Participation Rights Agreement with The Heritage Group described below, holders of common stock have no redemption, conversion or preemptive rights. All outstanding shares of common stock are fully paid and nonassessable, and the shares of common stock to be issued in the offerings will be fully paid and nonassessable.

Undesignated Preferred Stock

Our certificate of incorporation provides that we may issue up to 500,000 shares of preferred stock in one or more series as may be determined by our Board of Directors.

Our Board of Directors has broad discretionary authority with respect to the rights of any new series of preferred stock and may take several actions without any vote or action of the stockholders, including:

¶ To determine the number of shares to be included in each series;

¶ To fix the designation, voting powers, preferences and relative rights of the shares of each series and any qualifications, limitations or restrictions; and

¶ To increase or decrease the number of shares of any series.

We believe that the ability of our Board of Directors to issue one or more series of preferred stock will provide us with flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions, and in meeting other corporate needs that might arise. The authorized shares of preferred stock, as well as shares of common stock, will be available for issuance without action by our stockholders, unless such action is required by applicable law or the rules of any stock exchange or automated quotation system on which our securities may be listed or traded.

Our Board of Directors may authorize, without stockholder approval, the issuance of preferred stock with voting and conversion rights, that could adversely affect the voting power and other rights of holders of common stock. Preferred stock could be issued quickly with terms designed to delay or prevent a change in the control of our company or to make the removal of our management more difficult. This could have the effect of decreasing the market price of our common stock.

Although our Board of Directors has no intention at the present time of doing so, it could issue a series of preferred stock that could, depending on the terms of such series, impede the completion of a merger, tender offer or other takeover attempt of our company. Our Board of Directors will make any determination to issue such shares based on its judgment as to our company's best interest and the best interests of our stockholders. Our Board of Directors could issue preferred stock having terms that could discourage an acquisition attempt through which an acquirer may be able to change the composition of the Board of Directors, including a tender offer or other transaction that some, or a majority, of our stockholders might believe to be in their best interests or in which stockholders might receive a premium for their stock over the then-current market price.

Heritage Participation Rights

We have entered into a Participation Rights Agreement with The Heritage Group ("Heritage"), pursuant to which we will give Heritage the option to participate, pro rata based on its percentage ownership interest in our common stock, in any future equity offering for cash consideration, including (i) contracts with parties for equity financing (including any debt financing with an equity component) and (ii) issuances of equity securities or securities convertible,

exchangeable or exercisable into or for equity securities (including debt securities with an equity component). If Heritage exercises its rights with respect to all future offerings, it will be able to maintain its percentage ownership interest in our common stock. The Participation Rights Agreement does not have an expiration date. Heritage will not be required to participate or exercise its right of participation with respect to any future offerings. Heritage's right to participate will not apply to certain future offerings

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of securities that are not conducted to raise or obtain equity capital or cash such as stock issued as consideration in a merger or consolidation, in connection with strategic partnerships or joint ventures or for the acquisition of a business, product, license or other assets by us.

Listing

Our shares of common stock are listed on The Nasdaq Global Market under the symbol "HCCI."

Delaware Law and Charter and Bylaw Provisions' Anti-Takeover Effects

We have elected to be governed by the provisions of Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, or the DGCL, which we refer to as Section 203. In general, Section 203 prohibits a publicly held Delaware corporation from engaging in a "business combination" with an "interested stockholder" for a three-year period following the time that this stockholder becomes an interested stockholder, unless the business combination is approved in a prescribed manner. A "business combination" includes, among other things, a merger, asset sale or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to the interested stockholder. An "interested stockholder" is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns (or, in some cases, within three years prior, did own) 15% or more of the corporation's voting stock, or is an affiliate of the corporation and owned 15% or more of the corporation's voting stock at any time during the three years prior to the time that the determination of an interested stockholder is made. Immediately subsequent to the completion of the offerings, Heritage and Joseph Chalhoub will each be interested stockholders as defined under Section 203. Under Section 203, a business combination between the corporation and an interested stockholder is prohibited unless it satisfies one of the following conditions:

• Before the stockholder became interested, the Board of Directors approved either the business combination or the transaction which resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder; or

• Upon consummation of the transaction which resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder, the interested stockholder owned at least 85% of the voting stock of the corporation outstanding at the time the transaction commenced (excluding, for purposes of determining the number of our shares outstanding, shares owned by (a) persons who are directors and also officers and (b) employee stock plans, in some instances); or

• After the stockholder became interested, the business combination was approved by the Board of Directors of the corporation and authorized at an annual or special meeting of the stockholders by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the outstanding voting stock which is not owned by the interested stockholder.

Our bylaws provide for the division of our Board of Directors into three classes as nearly equal in size as possible with staggered three-year terms. Approximately one-third of our board will be elected each year and such vote required to elect directors will be a plurality of all votes. We refer you to "Management." In addition, our bylaws provide that directors may be removed only for cause and then only by the affirmative vote of the holders of seventy-five percent (75%) of the outstanding voting power of our capital stock outstanding and entitled to vote generally in the election of directors. Under our bylaws, any vacancy on our Board of Directors, however occurring, including a vacancy resulting from an enlargement of our board, may only be filled by vote of a majority of our directors then in office even if less than a quorum. The classification of our Board of Directors and the limitations on the removal of directors and filling of vacancies could have the effect of making it more difficult for a third party to acquire, or of discouraging a third party from attempting to acquire, control of us.

Our bylaws provide that special meetings of the stockholders may only be called by the Board of Directors, the chairman of the Board of Directors or upon the request of Heritage so long as it holds at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total voting power of all outstanding shares of capital stock. Our bylaws further provide that stockholders at an annual meeting may only consider proposals or nominations specified in the notice of meeting or brought before the meeting by or at the direction of the board or by a stockholder who was a stockholder of record on the record date for the meeting, who is entitled to vote at the meeting and who has given to our corporate secretary the required written notice, in proper form, of the stockholder's intention to bring that proposal or nomination before the meeting. In addition to other applicable requirements, for a stockholder proposal or nomination to be properly brought before an annual meeting by a stockholder, the stockholder generally must have given notice in proper written form to the

corporate secretary not less than 90 days nor more than 120 days prior to the anniversary date of the immediately preceding annual meeting of stockholders, unless the date of the annual meeting is advanced by more than 30 days or delayed by more than 60 days from the anniversary date, in which case the notice must be delivered no later than the 10th day following the day on which public announcement of the meeting is first made. Although our bylaws do not give the board the power to approve or disapprove stockholder nominations of candidates or proposals regarding other business to be conducted at a special or annual meeting, our bylaws may have the effect of precluding the consideration of some business at a meeting if the proper procedures are not followed or may discourage or

defer a potential acquirer from conducting a solicitation of proxies to elect its own slate of directors or otherwise attempting to obtain control of us.

Our certificate of incorporation also provides that any action required or permitted to be taken by our stockholders at an annual meeting or special meeting of stockholders may only be taken at a stockholders meeting and may not be taken by written consent in lieu of a meeting. Our certificate of incorporation includes a “constituency” provision that permits (but does not require) a director of our company in taking any action (including an action that may involve or relate to a change or potential change in control of us) to consider, among other things, the effect that our actions may have on other interests or persons (including our employees, clients, suppliers, customers and the community) in addition to our stockholders.

The Delaware corporate law provides generally that the affirmative vote of a majority of the shares entitled to vote on any matter is required to amend a corporation’s certificate of incorporation or bylaws or to approve mergers, consolidations or the sale of all or substantially all its assets, unless a corporation’s certificate of incorporation or bylaws, as the case may be, requires a greater percentage. Our certificate of incorporation provides that the affirmative vote of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the total voting power of all shares of capital stock is required to amend our certificate of incorporation or our bylaws, or to approve mergers, consolidations, conversions or the sale of all or substantially all of our assets. Our bylaws may also be amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, subject to any limitations set forth in the bylaws. The 75% stockholder vote would be in addition to any separate class vote that might in the future be required pursuant to the terms of any series of preferred stock that might be outstanding at the time any of these amendments are submitted to stockholders.

Limitation of Liability and Indemnification

Our certificate of incorporation and bylaws provide that:

• We must indemnify our directors and officers to the fullest extent permitted by Delaware law, as it may be amended from time to time;

• We may indemnify our other employees and agents to the same extent that we indemnify our officers and directors, unless otherwise required by law, our certificate of incorporation or our bylaws; and

• We must advance expenses, as incurred, to our directors and officers in connection with legal proceedings to the fullest extent permitted by Delaware law, subject to very limited exceptions.

In addition, our certificate of incorporation provides that our directors will not be liable for monetary damages to us for breaches of their fiduciary duty as directors, except for:

• any breach of their duty of loyalty to us or our stockholders;

• acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;

• under Section 174 of the DGCL, with respect to unlawful dividends or redemptions; or

• any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

We also have director and officer insurance providing for indemnification for our directors and officers for certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933.

These provisions may discourage stockholders from bringing a lawsuit against our directors for breach of their fiduciary duty. These provisions may also have the effect of reducing the likelihood of derivative litigation against directors and officers, even though such an action, if successful, might otherwise benefit us and our stockholders. Furthermore, a stockholder’s investment may be adversely affected to the extent we pay the costs of settlement and damage awards against directors and officers pursuant to these indemnification provisions. We believe that these

provisions, the insurance and the indemnity agreements are necessary to attract and retain talented and experienced directors and officers.

At present, there is no pending litigation or proceeding involving any of our directors or officers where indemnification will be required or permitted. We are not aware of any threatened litigation or proceeding that might result in a claim for such indemnification.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is Registrar and Transfer Company.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplement, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer under this prospectus. The following statements with respect to the warrants are summaries of, and subject to, the detailed provisions of a warrant agreement to be entered into by the Company and a warrant agent to be selected at the time of issue (the “warrant agent”), a form of which will be filed with the SEC.

General

The warrants, evidenced by warrant certificates, may be issued under the warrant agreement independently or together with any securities offered by any prospectus supplement and may be attached to or separate from such securities. If warrants are offered, the prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the warrants, including the following:

• The offering price, if any;

• If applicable, the number of shares of preferred stock or common stock purchasable upon exercise of each warrant and the initial price at which such shares may be purchased upon exercise;

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

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

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

• Federal income tax consequences;

• Call provisions of such warrants, if any;

• Anti-dilution provisions of the warrants, if any;

• Whether the warrants represented by the warrant certificates will be issued in registered or bearer form; and

• Any additional or other terms, procedures, rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions relating to the warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the warrants.

The shares of preferred stock or common stock issuable upon the exercise of the warrants will, when issued in accordance with the warrant agreement, be fully paid and non-assessable.

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplement, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the depositary shares that we may offer under this prospectus. The following statements with respect to the depositary shares and depositary receipts are summaries of, and subject to, the detailed provisions of a deposit agreement to be entered into by the Company and a depositary to be selected at the time of issue (the “depositary”) and the form of depositary receipt. The form of deposit agreement and the form of depositary receipt will be filed with the SEC.

General

We may, at our option, elect to issue fractional shares of preferred stock, rather than full shares of preferred stock. In the event such option is exercised, we may elect to have a depositary issue receipts for depositary shares, each receipt representing a fraction, to be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of preferred stock, of

a share of a particular series of preferred stock as described below.

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The shares of any series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares will be deposited under a deposit agreement between us and a bank or trust company that we select. Subject to the terms of the deposit agreement, each owner of a depositary share will be entitled, in proportion to the applicable fraction of a share of preferred stock represented by such depositary share, to all the rights and preferences of the preferred stock represented by the depositary share, including dividend, voting, redemption, and liquidation rights.

Depositary Receipts

The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the deposit agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to those persons purchasing the fractional shares of preferred stock in accordance with the terms of an offering of the preferred stock.

Withdrawal of Preferred Stock

Upon surrender of depositary receipts at the office of the depositary and upon payment of the charges provided in the deposit agreement, a holder of depositary receipts may have the depositary deliver to the holder the whole shares of preferred stock relating to the surrendered depositary receipts. Holders of depositary shares may receive whole shares of the related series of preferred stock on the basis set forth in the related prospectus supplement for such series of preferred stock, but holders of such whole shares will not after the exchange be entitled to receive depositary shares for their whole shares. If the depositary receipts delivered by the holder evidence a number of depositary shares in excess of the number of depositary shares representing the number of whole shares of the related series of preferred stock to be withdrawn, the depositary will deliver to the holder at the same time a new depositary receipt evidencing such excess number of depositary shares.

Dividends and Other Distributions

The depositary will distribute all cash dividends or other cash distributions received for the preferred stock to the record holders of depositary shares relating to the preferred stock in proportion to the numbers of such depositary shares owned by such holders.

In the event of a distribution other than in cash, the depositary will distribute property received by it to the record holders of depositary shares entitled thereto, unless the depositary determines that it is not feasible to make distribution of the property. In that case the depositary may, with our approval, sell such property and distribute the net proceeds from the sale to such holders.

Redemption of Depositary Shares

If a series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares is subject to redemption, the depositary shares will be redeemed from the proceeds received by the depositary resulting from the redemption, in whole or in part, of the series of preferred stock held by the depositary. The redemption price per depositary share will be equal to the applicable fraction of the redemption price per share payable with respect to the series of the preferred stock.

Whenever we redeem shares of preferred stock held by the depositary, the depositary will redeem as of the same redemption date the number of depositary shares representing shares of preferred stock redeemed by us. If less than all the depositary shares are to be redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by lot or pro rata as may be determined by the depositary.

Voting the Preferred Stock

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which the holders of the preferred stock are entitled to vote, the depositary will mail the information contained in such notice of meeting to the record holders of the depositary shares relating to such preferred stock. Each record holder of such depositary shares on the record date, which will be the same date as the record date for the preferred stock, will be entitled to instruct the depositary as to the exercise of the voting rights pertaining to the amount of the preferred stock represented by such holder's depositary shares. The depositary will endeavor, insofar as practicable, to vote the amount of the preferred stock represented by such depositary shares in accordance with such instructions, and we will agree to take all action which may be deemed necessary by the depositary in order to enable the depositary to do so. The depositary will not vote the preferred stock to the extent it does not receive specific instructions from the holders of depositary shares representing such preferred stock.

Amendment and Termination of the Deposit Agreement

We and the depositary at any time may amend the form of depositary receipt evidencing the depositary shares and any provision of the deposit agreement. However, any amendment which materially and adversely alters the rights of the holders of depositary shares will not be effective unless such amendment has been approved by the holders of at least a majority of the depositary shares then outstanding. We or the depositary may terminate the deposit agreement only if all outstanding depositary shares have been redeemed, or there has been a final distribution in respect of the preferred stock in connection with any liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the Company and such distribution has been distributed to the holders of depositary receipts.

Charges of Depositary

We will pay all transfer and other taxes and governmental charges arising solely from the existence of the depositary arrangements. We will pay charges of the depositary in connection with the initial deposit of the preferred stock and any redemption of the preferred stock. Holders of depositary receipts will pay other transfer and other taxes and governmental charges and such other charges as are expressly provided in the deposit agreement to be for their accounts.

Miscellaneous

The depositary will forward to the record holders of the depositary shares relating to such preferred stock all reports and communications from us which are delivered to the depositary.

Neither we nor the depositary will be liable if either one is prevented or delayed by law or any circumstance beyond their control in performing the obligations under the deposit agreement. The obligations of us and the depositary under the deposit agreement will be limited to performance in good faith of their duties thereunder, and they will not be obligated to prosecute or defend any legal proceeding in respect of any depositary shares or preferred stock unless satisfactory indemnity is furnished. The depositary may rely upon written advice of counsel or accountants, or information provided by persons presenting preferred stock for deposit, holders of depositary receipts or other persons believed to be competent and on documents believed to be genuine.

Resignation and Removal of Depositary

The depositary may resign at any time by delivering to us notice of its election to do so, and we may at any time remove the depositary, any such resignation or removal to take effect upon the appointment of a successor depositary and its acceptance of such appointment. Such successor depositary must be appointed within 60 days after delivery of the notice of resignation or removal.

DESCRIPTION OF STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND STOCK PURCHASE UNITS

We may issue stock purchase contracts, representing contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and we may sell to the holders, a specified number of shares of common stock at a future date or dates. The price per share of common stock may be fixed at the time the stock purchase contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula set forth in the stock purchase contracts. Stock purchase contracts may be issued separately or as a part of units ("stock purchase units") consisting of a stock purchase contract securing the holder's obligations to purchase the common stock under the stock purchase contract securing. The stock purchase contracts may require us to make periodic payments to the holders of the stock purchase units or vice versa, and such payments may be unsecured or prefunded on some basis. The stock purchase contracts may require holders to secure their obligations thereunder in a specified manner, and in certain circumstances we may deliver newly issued prepaid stock purchase contracts ("prepaid securities") upon release to a holder of any collateral securing such holder's obligations under the original stock purchase contract.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any stock purchase contracts or stock purchase units and, if applicable, prepaid securities. Certain material United States Federal income tax considerations applicable to the stock purchase units and stock purchase contracts will be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating thereto.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RIGHTS

General

We may issue rights to purchase our preferred stock, depositary shares, common stock or warrants to purchase preferred stock, depositary shares or common stock. We may issue rights independently or together with any other offered security. The rights may or may not be transferable by the recipient of the rights. In connection with any rights offering to our stockholders, we may enter into a standby underwriting arrangement with one or more underwriters or stockholders providing for the underwriters to purchase any offered securities remaining unsubscribed for after the rights offering. In connection with a rights offering to our stockholders, a prospectus supplement will be distributed to our stockholders on the record date for receiving rights in the rights offering set by us.

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

• the title of the rights;

• the securities for which the rights are exercisable;

• the exercise price for the rights;

• the number of rights issued;

• the extent to which the rights are transferable;

• if applicable, a discussion of the federal income tax considerations applicable to the issuance or exercise of the rights;

• any other terms of the rights, including terms, and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise the rights;

• the date on which the right to exercise the rights will commence, and the date on which the right will expire;

• the extent to which the rights include an over-subscription privilege with respect to unsubscribed securities; and

• if applicable, the material terms of any standby underwriting arrangement entered into by us in connection with the rights offering.

Exercise of Rights

Each right will entitle the holder thereof of rights to purchase for cash the principal amount of shares of preferred stock, depositary shares, common stock, warrants or any combination of those securities at the exercise price as will be set forth in, or be determinable as set forth in, the applicable prospectus supplement. Rights may be exercised at any time up to the close of business on the expiration date for such rights set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, all unexercised rights will become void.

Rights may be exercised as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Upon receipt of payment and proper exercise of the rights, we will, as soon as practicable, forward the securities purchasable upon such exercise. In the event that not all of the rights issued in any offering are exercised, we may determine to offer any unsubscribed offered securities directly to persons other than stockholders, to or through agents, underwriters or dealers or through a combination of such methods, including pursuant to standby underwriting arrangements, as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

DESCRIPTION OF UNITS

We may issue units under one or more unit agreements, each referred to as a unit agreement, to be entered into between us and a third party, as unit agent. The unit agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the units governed by the unit agreement and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any

holders of units or interests in those units. We may issue units comprising one or more of the securities described in this prospectus in any combination. Each unit will be issued so that the holder of the unit also is the holder of each security included in the unit. Thus, the holder of a unit will have the rights and obligations of a holder of each included security. The unit agreement under which a

unit is issued may provide that the securities included in the unit may not be held or transferred separately at any time or at any time before a specified date.

The applicable prospectus supplement relating to the units we may offer will include specific terms relating to the offering, including, among others: the designation and terms of the units and of the securities comprising the units, and whether and under what circumstances those securities may be held or transferred separately; any provision for the issuance, payment, settlement, transfer or exchange of the units or of the securities comprising those units; and whether the units will be issued in fully registered or global form.

The description in the applicable prospectus supplement and other offering material of any units we offer will not necessarily be complete and will be qualified in its entirety by reference to the applicable unit agreement and unit certificate, which will be filed with the SEC if we offer units.

BOOK-ENTRY ISSUANCE

Unless otherwise indicated in a prospectus supplement, securities of a series offered by us under this prospectus may be issued in the form of one or more fully registered global securities. If a fully registered global security is used, anticipate that these global securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company (“DTC”), which will act as depository, and registered in the name of its nominee. Except as described below, the global securities may be transferred, in whole and not in part, only to DTC or to another nominee of DTC.

DTC has advised us that it is:

- ▲ limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law;
- ▲ “banking organization” within the meaning of the New York Banking Law;
- ▲ member of the Federal Reserve System;
- ▲ “clearing corporation” within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code; and
- ▲ “clearing agency” registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

DTC was created to hold securities for institutions that have accounts with DTC (“participants”) and to facilitate the clearance and settlement of securities transactions among its participants through electronic book-entry changes in participants’ accounts. Participants include securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations and certain other organizations, some of whom (and/or their representatives) own DTC. Access to DTC’s book-entry system is also available to others that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a participant, either directly or indirectly. DTC administers its book-entry system in accordance with its rules and bylaws and legal requirements.

Upon issuance of a global security representing offered securities, DTC will credit on its book-entry registration and transfer system the principal amount to participants’ accounts. Ownership of beneficial interests in the global security will be limited to participants or to persons that hold interests through participants. Ownership of interests in the global security will be shown on, and the transfer of those ownership interests will be effected only through, records maintained by DTC (with respect to participants’ interests) and the participants (with respect to the owners of beneficial interests in the global security). The laws of some jurisdictions may require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of those securities in definitive form. These limits and laws may impair the ability to transfer beneficial interests in a global security.

So long as DTC (or its nominee) is the registered holder and owner of a global security, DTC (or its nominee) will be considered the sole owner and holder of the related offered securities. Except as described below, owners of beneficial interests in a global security will not:

- ✖ Be entitled to have the securities registered in their names; or
- ✖ Receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of certificated securities in definitive form.

Purchases of securities under the DTC system must be made by or through direct participants, which will receive a credit for the securities on DTC’s records. The ownership interest of each actual purchaser of each global security (“beneficial owner”) is in turn recorded on the direct and indirect participants’ records. A beneficial owner does not receive written

confirmation from DTC of its purchase, but is expected to receive a written confirmation providing details of the transaction, as well as periodic statements of its holdings, from the direct or indirect participants through which such beneficial owner entered into the action. Transfers of ownership interests in securities are accomplished by entries made on the books of participants acting on behalf of beneficial owners. Beneficial owners do not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in securities, except in the event that use of the book-entry system for the securities is discontinued.

To facilitate subsequent transfers, the securities are registered in the name of DTC's partnership nominee, Cede & Co. The deposit of the securities with DTC and their registration in the name of Cede & Co. will effect no change in beneficial ownership. DTC has no knowledge of the actual beneficial owners of the securities; DTC records reflect only the identity of the direct participants to whose accounts securities are credited, which may or may not be the beneficial owners. The participants remain responsible for keeping account of their holdings on behalf of their customers.

Delivery of notice and other communications by DTC to direct participants, by direct participants to indirect participants, and by direct participants and indirect participants to beneficial owners are governed by arrangements among them, subject to any statutory or regulatory requirements as may be in effect from time to time.

Neither DTC nor Cede & Co. consents or votes with respect to the securities. Under its usual procedures, DTC mails a proxy (an "Omnibus Proxy") to the issuer as soon as possible after the record date. The Omnibus Proxy assigns Cede & Co.'s consenting or voting rights to those direct participants to whose accounts the securities are credited on the record date (identified on a list attached to the Omnibus Proxy).

Redemption proceeds, distributions and dividend payments, if any, on the securities will be made to DTC. DTC's practice is to credit direct participants' accounts on the payment date in accordance with their respective holdings as shown on DTC's records, unless DTC has reason to believe that it will not receive payment on the payment date. Payments by participants to beneficial owners are governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is the case with securities held for the accounts of customers in bearer form or registered in "street name," and are the responsibility of such participant and not of DTC, the trustee or us, subject to any statutory or regulatory requirements as may be in effect from time to time. Payment of principal and interest, if any, to DTC is our or the trustee's responsibility, disbursement of such payments to direct participants is DTC's responsibility, and disbursement of such payments to the beneficial owners is the responsibility of direct and indirect participants.

DTC may discontinue providing its services as securities depository with respect to the securities at any time by giving reasonable notice to us or, if applicable, the trustee. Under such circumstances, in the event that a successor securities depository is not appointed, security certificates are required to be printed and delivered.

We may decide to discontinue use of the system of book-entry transfers through DTC or a successor securities depository. In that event, security certificates will be printed and delivered.

We have obtained the information in this section concerning DTC and DTC's book-entry system from sources that we believe to be reliable, but we take no responsibility for the accuracy of this information.

None of us, any underwriter or agent, the trustee or any applicable paying agent will have any responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records relating to or payments made on account of beneficial interests in a global security, or for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to such beneficial interest.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

The Company may sell the securities in one or more of the following ways (or in any combination thereof) from time to time:

• Through underwriters or dealers;

• Directly to one or more purchasers;

• Through agents; or

• Through any other methods described in a prospectus supplement.

The applicable prospectus supplement will state the terms of the offering of any securities, including:

• The name or names of any underwriters, dealers or agents and the amount of securities underwritten or purchased by each of them;

• The purchase price of such securities and the proceeds to be received by us, if any;

• Any discounts, commissions or concessions or other items constituting compensation allowed, reallocated or paid to underwriters, dealers or agents, if any;

• Any public offering price;

• Any securities exchanges on which the securities may be listed.

Any public offering price and any discounts, commissions or concessions or other items constituting compensation allowed or reallocated or paid to underwriters, dealers or agents may be changed from time to time.

Securities may also be sold in one or more of the following transactions, or in any transactions described in a prospectus supplement:

• Block transactions in which a broker-dealer may sell all or a portion of the securities as agent but may position and resell all or a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction;

• Purchase by a broker-dealer as principal and resale by the broker-dealer for its own account;

• A special offering, an exchange distribution or a secondary distribution in accordance with the rules of any exchange on which the securities are listed;

• Ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which a broker-dealer solicits purchasers;

• Sales “at the market” to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise; or

• Sales in other ways not involving market makers or established trading markets, including direct sales to purchasers.

The securities we sell by any of the methods described above may be sold to the public, in one or more transactions, either:

• At a fixed public offering price or prices, which may be changed;

• At market prices prevailing at the time of sale;

• At prices related to prevailing market prices; or

• At negotiated prices.

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

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

Underwriters and agents may be entitled under agreements entered into with us to indemnification by us against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, or to contribution with respect to payments which

the underwriters or agents may be required to make. Underwriters and agents may engage in transactions with, or perform services for us and our affiliates in the ordinary course of business.

In compliance with the guidelines of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA"), the aggregate maximum discount, commission or agency fees or other items constituting underwriting compensation to be received by any FINRA member or independent broker-dealer will not exceed 8% of any offering pursuant to this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, as the case may be.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. The public may read and copy any reports, statements or other information that we file with the SEC at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information regarding the Public Reference Room. Our public filings also are available to the public from commercial document retrieval services and may be obtained without charge at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov. Our filings with the SEC are also available on our website at www.crystal-clean.com. The information on our website is not incorporated by reference in this prospectus or our other securities filings and you should not consider it a part of this prospectus or our other securities filings.

As noted above, we have filed with the SEC a registration statement on Form S-3 to register the securities. This prospectus is part of that registration statement and, as permitted by the SEC's rules, does not contain all the information set forth in the registration statement. For further information you may refer to the registration statement and to the exhibits and schedules filed as part of the registration statement. You can review and copy the registration statement and its exhibits and schedules at the Public Reference Room maintained by the SEC as described above. The registration statement, including its exhibits and schedules, is also available on the SEC's website.

INCORPORATION OF INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate information into this prospectus "by reference," which means that we can disclose important information by referring to another document or information filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus, except for any information amended or superseded by information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus. This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents and information set forth below that we have previously filed (but not furnished) with the SEC. These documents contain important information about us and our financial condition.

• Our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 29, 2012;

• The Company's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 23, 2013, June 15, 2013, and September 7, 2013,

• The Company's Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, as filed with the SEC on April 3, 2013 (other than such information that is included in the proxy statement but not deemed to be filed with the SEC);

• The description of our common stock contained in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on March 10, 2008.

• The Company's Current Reports on Form 8-K as filed with the SEC on February 5, 2013, February 11, 2013, and May 8, 2013.

We do not incorporate portions of any document that is either (a) described in paragraphs (d)(1) through (3) and (e)(5) of Item 407 of Regulation S-K promulgated by the SEC or (b) furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K. We hereby incorporate by reference all future filings by us made pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, after the date of this prospectus. Nothing in this prospectus shall be deemed to incorporate information furnished but not filed with the SEC.

We will provide without charge upon written or oral request, a copy of any or all of the documents which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus, other than exhibits which are specifically incorporated by reference into those documents. Requests should be directed to Corporate Secretary, Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc., 2175 Point Boulevard, Suite 375, Elgin, Illinois 60123-6436, telephone: (847) 836-5670.

LEGAL MATTERS

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplements, certain legal matters in connection with the securities will be passed upon for us by McDermott Will & Emery LLP, Chicago, Illinois. Additional legal matters may be passed on for us, or any underwriters, dealers or agents, by counsel that we will name in the applicable prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement have been so incorporated by reference in reliance upon the reports of Grant Thornton LLP, independent registered public accountants, upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

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

Our estimated expenses in connection with the distribution of the securities being registered, other than underwriting compensation, are as set forth in the following table:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---|
| SEC Registration Fee | \$12,880 | |
| Printing and Engraving Expenses | 50,000 | * |
| Legal Fees and Expenses | 50,000 | * |
| Accounting Fees and Expenses | 75,000 | * |
| Miscellaneous | 26,405 | * |
| Total | \$214,285 | |

*Estimated

Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers

Section 145 of the DGCL provides that a corporation may indemnify any persons, including officers and directors, who are, or are threatened to be made, parties to any threatened, pending or completed legal action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of such corporation), by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of such corporation or is or was serving at the request of such corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise. The indemnity may include expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, provided such director, officer, employee or agent acted in good faith and in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that the person's conduct was unlawful. A Delaware corporation may indemnify officers and directors in an action by or in the right of the corporation under the same conditions, except that no indemnification is permitted without judicial approval if the officer or director is adjudged to be liable to the corporation. Where an officer or director is successful on the merits or otherwise in the defense of any action referred to above, the corporation must indemnify him against the expenses that such officer or director actually and reasonably incurred. The indemnification permitted under the DGCL is not exclusive, and a corporation is empowered to purchase and maintain insurance against liabilities, whether or not indemnification would be permitted by statute.

Heritage Crystal Clean, Inc. is a Delaware corporation.

Our certificate of incorporation, as amended, provides that we shall indemnify and hold harmless, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law as it presently exists or may hereafter be amended, any person who was or is made or is threatened to be made a party or is otherwise involved in any action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, any or all of which may be referred to as a proceeding, by reason of the fact that he or she, or a person for whom

he or she is the legal representative, is or was at any time a director or officer of the corporation or, while a director or officer of the corporation, is or was at any time serving at the written request of the corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation or of a partnership, joint venture, trust, enterprise or nonprofit entity, including service with respect to employee benefit plans, against all liability and loss suffered and expenses (including attorneys' fees) reasonably incurred by such person; provided, however, that we shall be required to indemnify a person in connection with a proceeding (or part thereof) initiated by such person only if the commencement of such proceeding (or part thereof) was authorized by our Board of Directors.

Section 102 of the DGCL permits the limitation of directors' personal liability to the corporation or its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duties as a director except for (i) any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to the corporation or its stockholders, (ii) acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of the law, (iii) breaches under section 174 of the DGCL, which relates to unlawful payments of dividends or unlawful stock repurchase or redemptions, and (iv) any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

Our certificate of incorporation, as amended, limits the personal liability of our directors to the fullest extent permitted by section 102 of the DGCL.

Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers or persons controlling the registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, the registrant has been informed that in the opinion of the SEC such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is therefore unenforceable.

We maintain directors' and officers' liability insurance for our officers and directors.

Item 16. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules

Exhibits

- 1.1* Form of Underwriting Agreement for Equity Securities
- 1.3* Form of Underwriting Agreement for Depositary Shares, Stock Purchase Contracts, Stock Purchase Units, Rights and Units
- 3.1 Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc. (incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011)
- 3.2 Bylaws of Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc. (incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 3.2 to the Registrant's Amendment No. 6 to the Registrant's Registration Statement on Form S-1 (SEC No. 333-1438640) filed with the SEC on February 25, 2008)
- 4.1 Form of Specimen Common Stock Certificate of Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc. (incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 4.1 of Amendment No. 7 to the Company's Registration Statement on Form S-1 (No. 333-1438640) filed with the SEC on March 7, 2008)
- 4.2* Form of Deposit Agreement
- 4.3* Form of Depositary Receipt
- 4.4* Form of Stock Warrant Agreement
- 4.5* Form of Stock Purchase Contract
- 4.6* Form of Stock Purchase Unit
- 4.7* Form of Rights Agreement
- 5.1** Opinion of McDermott Will & Emery LLP
- 12.1** Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges
- 23.1** Consent of Grant Thornton LLP with respect to the financial statements of the Registrant
- 23.2 Consent of McDermott Will & Emery LLP (included in the opinion filed as Exhibit 5.1)
- 24 Powers of Attorney

* To be subsequently filed by amendment or as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K.

** Filed herewith.

Item 17. Undertakings

(a) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:

- (1) 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, as amended, or the Securities Act;

to reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of this 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 estimated 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 a 20% change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective registration statement; and
 - (ii) 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)(1)(i), (a)(1)(ii) and (a)(1)(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, as amended, 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.
 - (iii)
- (2) That, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, 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 shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.
- (3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.
- (4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act to any purchaser,
 - (i) each prospectus filed by the 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)(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 that 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.

- That, for the purpose of determining liability of the Registrant under the Securities Act to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned Registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to
- (5) 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 the 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 the undersigned Registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned registrant;

- (iii) The portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned Registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of the undersigned Registrant; and

- (iv) Any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned Registrant to the purchaser.

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

- (c) That, in the event that securities are to be offered to existing security holders pursuant to warrants or rights and any securities not taken by security holders are to be reoffered to the public, the registrant will supplement the prospectus, after the expiration of the subscription period, to set forth the results of the subscription offer, the transactions by the underwriters during the subscription period, the amount of unsubscribed securities to be purchased by the underwriters, and the terms of any subsequent reoffering thereof. If any public offering by the underwriters is to be made on terms differing from those set forth on the cover page of the prospectus, a post-effective amendment or supplemental prospectus will be filed to set forth the terms of such offering.

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

- (e) (1) For purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, the information omitted from the form of prospectus filed as part of this registration statement in reliance upon Rule 430A and contained in a form of prospectus filed by the Registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(1) or (4) or 497(h) under the Securities Act will be deemed to be part of this registration statement as of the time it was declared effective.

- (2) For the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each post-effective amendment that contains a form of prospectus will be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time will be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, 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 amendment to the registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Chicago, State of Illinois on December 24, 2013.

Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc.

By: /s/ Joseph Chalhoub _____
 Name: Joseph Chalhoub
 Title: Chief Executive Officer

POWER OF ATTORNEY

We, the undersigned officers and directors of Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc., hereby severally constitute and appoint Joseph Chalhoub and Mark DeVita, and each of them singly, our true and lawful attorneys with full power to any of them, and to each of them singly, to sign for us and in our names in the capacities indicated below any and all amendments to this registration statement and any related registration statement filed pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (in each case, including, without limitation, any post-effective amendments), and generally to do all such things in our name and behalf in our capacities as officers and directors to enable Heritage-Crystal Clean, Inc. to comply with the provisions of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and all requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission, hereby ratifying and confirming our signatures as they may be signed by our said attorneys, or any of them, to said registration statements and any and all amendments thereto.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities indicated on December 24, 2013.

| Signature | Title |
|---------------------------|---|
| /s/ Joseph Chalhoub | President, Chief Executive Officer and Director (Principal Executive Officer of the Registrant) |
| Joseph Chalhoub | |
| /s/ Mark DeVita | Chief Financial Officer, (Principal Financial Officer and Principle Accounting Officer of the Registrant) |
| Mark DeVita | |
| /s/ Gregory Ray | Chief Operating Officer of the Registrant |
| Gregory Ray | |
| * | Director |
| Fred Fehsenfeld, Jr. | |
| * | Director |
| Brian Recatto | |
| * | Director |
| Bruce Bruckmann | |
| * | Director |
| Carmine Falcone | |
| * | Director |
| Charles E. Schalliol | |
| * | Director |
| Robert W. Willmschen, Jr. | |

