

BERKSHIRE HILLS BANCORP INC

Form S-3

September 12, 2006

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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 12, 2006

Registration No. 333- •

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**UNITED STATES**

**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

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**FORM S-3**

**REGISTRATION STATEMENT**

*UNDER*

*THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933*

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**Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc.**

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

**Delaware**  
(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)

**04-3510455**  
(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)

---

24 North Street

Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

(413) 443-5601

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of registrant's principal executive offices)

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Michael P. Daly

President and Chief Executive Officer

Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc.

24 North Street

Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

(413) 443-5601

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

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*Copies to:*

# Edgar Filing: BERKSHIRE HILLS BANCORP INC - Form S-3

Lawrence M. F. Spaccasi, Esquire

Edward G. Olifer, Esquire

Scott A. Brown, Esquire

Muldoon Murphy & Aguggia LLP

5101 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20016

(202) 362-0840

**Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public:** From time to time after the effective date of this registration statement as determined by market conditions and other factors.

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

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

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

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

If 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. ☐

**The registrant hereby amends this registration statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the registrant shall file a further amendment which specifically states that this registration statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 or until the registration statement shall become effective on such date as the Commission, acting pursuant to said section 8(a), may determine.**

## CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of each Class of                               | Amount to be     |                                              |                                               |                                |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Securities to be Registered                          | Registered       | Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit (1) | Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price (2) | Amount of Registration Fee (2) |
| Debt Securities of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. (3) | (4)              | (4)                                          | (4)                                           | (7)                            |
| Common Stock of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. (5)    | (4)              | (4)                                          | (4)                                           | (7)                            |
| Preferred Stock of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. (6) | (4)              | (4)                                          | (4)                                           | (7)                            |
| Total                                                | \$125,000,000(7) | 100%                                         | \$125,000,000(7)                              | \$13,375                       |

- (1) The proposed maximum offering price per unit will be determined from time to time by the registrants in connection with the offering by the registrants of the securities registered hereunder.
- (2) This registration statement registers the maximum aggregate offering price of all the securities listed in the Calculations of Fee Table as permitted by Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act of 1933 and the registration fee is based on that amount.
- (3) Subject to note (7) below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate principal amount of Debt Securities as may be sold, from time to time, by Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. ( Berkshire Hills Bancorp ).
- (4) Not applicable pursuant to General Instructions II.D. of Form S-3.
- (5) Subject to Note (7) below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate number of shares of Berkshire Hills Bancorp Common Stock, par value \$0.01, as from time to time may be issued at indeterminate prices. In accordance with Rule 416 under the Securities Act, this registration statement also covers such indeterminate number of additional shares of Common Stock to prevent dilution from stock splits or stock dividends or similar transactions.

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- (6) Subject to Note (7) below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate number of shares of Preferred Stock as may be sold, from time to time at indeterminate prices, by Berkshire Hills Bancorp.
  - (7) In no event will the aggregate initial offering price of all securities issued from time to time pursuant to this Registration Statement exceed \$125,000,000 or the equivalent thereof in one or more foreign currencies, foreign currency units, or composite currencies. If Debt Securities are issued at original issue discount, Berkshire Hills Bancorp may issue such higher principal amount as may be sold for an initial public offering price of up to \$125,000,000 (less the dollar amount of any securities previously issued hereunder), or the equivalent thereof in one or more foreign currencies, foreign currency units, or composite currencies. Any of the securities registered hereunder may be sold separately or as units with other securities registered hereunder.
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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This registration statement contains a form of prospectus to be used in connection with the offering and sale of debt securities, common stock and/or preferred stock.

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**The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. A registration statement relating to these securities has been filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission and has not yet been declared effective. The securities may not be sold until the registration statement has been declared 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 SEPTEMBER 12, 2006**

**PROSPECTUS**

**\$125,000,000**

**Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc.**

**Debt Securities**

**Common Stock**

**Preferred Stock**

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We may offer and sell from time to time, in one or more series, our unsecured debt securities, which may consist of notes, debentures, or other evidences of indebtedness, shares of our common stock or shares of our preferred stock. The debt securities and preferred stock may be convertible into or exchangeable for other securities of ours. This prospectus provides you with a general description of these securities. Each time we offer any securities pursuant to this prospectus, we will provide you with a prospectus supplement, and, if necessary, a pricing supplement, that will describe the specific amounts, prices and terms of the securities being offered. These supplements may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. To understand the terms of the securities offered, you should carefully read this prospectus with the applicable supplements, which together provide the specific terms of the securities we are offering.

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**These securities are not deposits or obligations of a bank or savings association and are not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency.**

This prospectus may be used to offer and sell securities only if accompanied by the prospectus supplement for those securities.

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

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**The date of this prospectus is •**

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS  
PROSPECTUS AND THE ACCOMPANYING PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT**

We may provide information to you about the securities we are offering in three separate documents that progressively provide more detail:

this prospectus, which provides general information, some of which may not apply to your securities;

the accompanying prospectus supplement, which describes the terms of the securities, some of which may not apply to your securities;  
and

if necessary, a pricing supplement, which describes the specific terms of your securities.

If the terms of your securities vary among the pricing supplement, the prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in the following order of priority:

the pricing supplement, if any;

the prospectus supplement; and

the prospectus.

We include cross-references in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement to captions in these materials where you can find further related discussions. The following Table of Contents and the Table of Contents included in the accompanying prospectus supplement provide the pages on which these captions are located.

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Unless indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we have not taken any action that would permit us to publicly sell these securities in any jurisdiction outside the United States. If you are an investor outside the United States, you should inform yourself about and comply with any restrictions as to the offering of the securities and the distribution of this prospectus.

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**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS**

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the SEC, utilizing a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may from time to time offer and sell the senior debt securities, subordinated debt securities, preferred stock or common stock described in this prospectus in one or more offerings, up to a total dollar amount of \$125,000,000. We may also sell other securities under the registration statement that will reduce the total dollar amount of securities that we may sell under this prospectus. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities covered by it. Each time we offer these securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of the offer and include a discussion of any risk factors or other special considerations that apply to the securities. 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 the additional information described under the heading *Where You Can Find More Information*.

Unless otherwise indicated or unless the context requires otherwise, all references in this prospectus to Berkshire Hills Bancorp, the Company, we, us, our or similar references mean Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. and references to the Bank mean Berkshire Bank.

**WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION**

We have filed with the SEC a registration statement under the Securities Act of 1933, the Securities Act, that registers, among other securities, the offer and sale of the securities that we may offer under this prospectus. The registration statement, including the attached exhibits and schedules included or incorporated by reference in the registration statement, contains additional relevant information about us. The rules and regulations of the SEC allow us to omit certain information included in the registration statement from this prospectus. In addition, we file reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Exchange Act.

You may read and copy this information at the following locations of the SEC:

Public Reference Room

100 F Street, N.E.

Room 1580

Washington, D.C. 20549

Northeast Regional Office

The Woolworth Building

233 Broadway

New York, New York 10279

## Edgar Filing: BERKSHIRE HILLS BANCORP INC - Form S-3

Midwest Regional Office

500 West Madison Street

Suite 1400

Chicago, Illinois 60661-2511

You may also obtain copies of this information by mail from the Public Reference Section of the SEC, 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580, Washington, D.C. 20549, at prescribed rates. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330.

The SEC also maintains an Internet world wide web site that contains reports, proxy statements and other information about issuers like us who file electronically with the SEC. The address of that site is:

<http://www.sec.gov>

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The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus. This means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document that we file separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus, except for any information that is superseded by information that is included directly in this document or in a more recent incorporated document.

This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents listed below that we have previously filed with the SEC.

| <b>SEC Filings</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Period or Filing Date (as applicable)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Annual Report on Form 10-K                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Year ended December 31, 2005                 |
| Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Quarter ended March 31, 2006                 |
| Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Quarter ended June 30, 2006                  |
| Current Reports on Form 8-K (in each case other than those portions furnished under Item 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K)                                                                                                                        | July 27, 2006                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | June 30, 2006                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | June 20, 2006                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | June 15, 2006                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | April 25, 2006                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | April 14, 2006                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | April 3, 2006                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | March 1, 2006                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | February 27, 2006                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | February 24, 2006                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | February 13, 2006                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | February 1, 2006                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | January 30, 2006                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | January 27, 2006                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | January 18, 2006                             |
| The description of Berkshire Hills Bancorp common stock and preferred stock set forth in the registration statement on Form 8-A (No. 0-51584) and any amendment or report filed with the SEC for the purpose of updating this description | October 25, 2005                             |

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In addition, we also incorporate by reference all future documents that we file with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act after the date of our initial registration statement relating to the securities until the completion of the distribution of the debt securities, preferred stock and common stock covered by this prospectus. These documents include periodic reports, such as annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q and current reports on Form 8-K (other than current reports furnished under Items 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K), as well as proxy statements.

The information incorporated by reference contains information about us and our financial condition and is an important part of this prospectus.

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You can obtain any of the documents incorporated by reference in this document through us, or from the SEC through the SEC's Internet world wide web site at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov). Documents incorporated by reference are

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available from us without charge, excluding any exhibits to those documents, unless the exhibit is specifically incorporated by reference as an exhibit in this prospectus. You can obtain documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus by requesting them in writing or by telephone from us at the following address:

Investor Relations Department

Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc.

24 North Street

Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

(413) 443-5601

In addition, we maintain a corporate website, [www.berkshirebank.com](http://www.berkshirebank.com). We make available, through our website, our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, and any amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the SEC. This reference to our website is for the convenience of investors as required by the SEC and shall not be deemed to incorporate any information on the website into this Registration Statement.

We have not authorized anyone to give any information or make any representation about us that is different from, or in addition to, those contained in this prospectus or in any of the materials that we have incorporated into this prospectus. If anyone does give you information of this sort, you should not rely on it. If you are in a jurisdiction where offers to sell, or solicitations of offers to purchase, the securities offered by this document are unlawful, or if you are a person to whom it is unlawful to direct these types of activities, then the offer presented in this document does not extend to you. The information contained in this document speaks only as of the date of this document unless the information specifically indicates that another date applies.

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**SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS**

This prospectus and the other documents we incorporate by reference in this prospectus, may include forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Forward-looking statements, which are based on certain assumptions and describe future plans, strategies, and expectations of the Company, are generally identified by use of the words anticipate, believe, estimate, expect, intend, plan, project, seek, strive, try, or future or such as will, would, should, could, may, or similar expressions. The Company's ability to predict results or the actual effects of its plans or strategies is inherently uncertain. Although we believe that our plans, intentions and expectations, as reflected in these forward-looking statements are reasonable, we can give no assurance that these plans, intentions or expectations will be achieved or realized. Our ability to predict results or the actual effects of our plans and strategies are inherently uncertain. Actual results, performance or achievements could differ materially from those contemplated, expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from our forward-looking statements are set forth under Item 1A Risk Factors in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K and in other reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. There are a number of factors, many of which are beyond our control, that could cause actual conditions, events, or results to differ significantly from those described in the forward-looking statements. These factors include, but are not limited to: general economic conditions, either nationally or locally in some or all of the areas in which we conduct our business; conditions in the securities markets or the banking industry; changes in interest rates, which may affect our net income or future cash flows; changes in deposit flows, and in demand for deposit, loan, and investment products and other financial services in our local markets; changes in real estate values, which could impact the quality of the assets securing our loans; changes in the quality or composition of the loan or investment portfolios; changes in competitive pressures among financial institutions or from non-financial institutions; the ability to successfully integrate any assets, liabilities, customers, systems, and management personnel we may acquire into our operations and our ability to realize related revenue synergies and cost savings within expected time frames; our timely development of new and competitive products or services in a changing environment, and the acceptance of such products or services by our customers; the outcome of pending or threatened litigation or of other matters before regulatory agencies, whether currently existing or commencing in the future; changes in accounting principles, policies, practices, or guidelines; changes in legislation and regulation; operational issues and/or capital spending necessitated by the potential need to adapt to industry changes in information technology systems, on which we are highly dependent; changes in the monetary and fiscal policies of the U.S. Government, including policies of the U.S. Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board; war or terrorist activities; and other economic, competitive, governmental, regulatory, and geopolitical factors affecting the Company's operations, pricing, and services. Additionally, the timing and occurrence or non-occurrence of events may be subject to circumstances beyond our control.

You should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which reflect our expectations only as of the date of this prospectus. We do not assume any obligation to revise forward-looking statements except as may be required by law.

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**BERKSHIRE HILLS BANCORP, INC.**

We are a Delaware corporation and the holding company for Berkshire Bank. Established in 1846, Berkshire Bank is one of Massachusetts oldest and largest independent banks and is the largest banking institution based in Western Massachusetts. Berkshire Bank is headquartered in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and operates 27 full-service banking offices serving communities throughout Western Massachusetts and in Northeastern New York. Berkshire Bank is structured to operate in three regions: its traditional Berkshire County Region; the Pioneer Valley Region along the Connecticut River valley in Massachusetts; and the New York Region serving Albany and the surrounding area in Northeastern New York.

Berkshire Bank is aggressively transitioning from a community bank to a regional bank. It plans to increase the size of its branch network and grow its commercial banking program. Additionally, Berkshire Bank seeks growth through whole bank, branch, insurance agency and/or trust business acquisitions, including possible expansion into Southern Vermont and Northern Connecticut. Berkshire Bank entered the Pioneer Valley area of Massachusetts in 2005 with the acquisition of Woronoco Bancorp, Inc., and has made acquisitions of insurance and financial planning providers in the last two years. Berkshire Bank is positioning itself as the financial institution of choice in its three regions. These three regions are viewed as having favorable demographics and provide an attractive regional niche for Berkshire Bank to distinguish itself as the preferred choice compared to larger super-regional banks and smaller community banks.

Berkshire Bank is a full-scale provider of deposit, lending, investment, and insurance products by a team of employees with extensive experience in banking, insurance and investment management. We stress quality control, including using Six Sigma tools to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. We are enhancing our credit and risk management functions to maintain strong asset quality and careful interest rate management. We stress a culture of teamwork and performance excellence to produce customer satisfaction as the basis for our strategic growth and profitability. At June 30, 2006, we had total assets of \$2.15 billion, total deposits of \$1.46 billion, and total consolidated stockholders' equity of \$248.3 million.

Our common stock trades on the Nasdaq Stock Market under the symbol BHLB.

Berkshire Bank is subject to comprehensive regulation, examination and supervision by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Banks and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the FDIC. Berkshire Hills Bancorp is subject to regulation, examination and supervision by the Office of Thrift Supervision, the OTS, as a savings and loan holding company.

Our principal executive offices are located at 24 North Street, Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201, and our telephone number is (413) 443-5601.

Additional information about us and our subsidiaries is included in documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus. See *Where You Can Find More Information* on page 1 of this prospectus.

**CONSOLIDATED RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

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Our consolidated ratios of earnings to fixed charges were as follows for the periods presented:

|                                     | Six Months Ended | Years Ended December 31, |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                     | June 30, 2006    | 2005                     | 2004  | 2003  | 2002  | 2001  |
| Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges | 1.50x            | 1.45x                    | 1.82x | 1.75x | 1.13x | 1.39x |

For the purpose of computing the ratios of earnings to fixed charges, the term **fixed charges** means the sum of interest expensed, amortization of capitalized expenses related to indebtedness and an estimate of the interest within rental expense. The term **earnings** is the amount resulting from adding income from continuing operations before income taxes, the adjustment for minority interests in consolidated subsidiaries and fixed charges. A statement setting forth details of the computation of the ratios of earnings to fixed charges is included as Exhibit 12 to the registration statement.

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**USE OF PROCEEDS**

We intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of the securities for general corporate purposes unless otherwise indicated in the prospectus supplement relating to a specific issue of securities. Our general corporate purposes may include repurchasing our outstanding common stock, financing possible acquisitions of branches, other financial institutions, other businesses that are related to banking or diversification into other banking-related businesses, extending credit to, or funding investments in, our subsidiaries and repaying, reducing or refinancing indebtedness.

The precise amounts and the timing of our use of the net proceeds will depend upon market conditions, our subsidiaries' funding requirements, the availability of other funds and other factors. Until we use the net proceeds from the sale of any of our securities for general corporate purposes, we will use the net proceeds to reduce our indebtedness or for temporary investments. We expect that we will, on a recurrent basis, engage in additional financings as the need arises to finance our corporate strategies, to fund our subsidiaries, to finance acquisitions or otherwise.

**REGULATION AND SUPERVISION**

Our principal subsidiary, Berkshire Bank, is a Massachusetts-chartered savings bank and is subject to regulation and supervision by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Banks and by the FDIC. As the holding company for Berkshire Bank, we are a savings and loan holding company subject to regulation and supervision by the OTS.

Because we are a holding company, our rights and the rights of our creditors, including the holders of the debt securities, preferred stock and common stock we are offering under this prospectus, to participate in the assets of any of our subsidiaries upon the subsidiary's liquidation or reorganization will be subject to the prior claims of the subsidiary's creditors, except to the extent that we may ourselves be a creditor with recognized claims against the subsidiary.

In addition, dividends, loans and advances from the Bank are restricted by federal and state statutes and regulations. Under applicable banking statutes, at June 30, 2006, the Bank could have declared additional dividends of \$5.0 million without further regulatory approval. The FDIC, the OTS and the Massachusetts Commissioner of Banks can limit the Bank's payment of dividends based on other factors, such as the maintenance of adequate capital for such subsidiary bank.

In addition, there are various statutory and regulatory limitations on the extent to which the Bank can finance us or otherwise transfer funds or assets to us or to our nonbanking subsidiaries, whether in the form of loans, extensions of credit, investments or asset purchases. These extensions of credit and other transactions involving the Bank and us or a nonbanking subsidiary of ours are limited in amount to 10% of the Bank's capital and surplus and, with respect to us and all our nonbanking subsidiaries, to an aggregate of 20% of the Bank's capital and surplus. Furthermore, loans and extensions of credit are required to be secured in specified amounts and are required to be on terms and conditions consistent with safe and sound banking practices.

For a discussion of the material elements of the regulatory framework applicable to savings and loan holding companies and their subsidiaries, and specific information relevant to us, you should refer to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2005, and any other subsequent reports filed by us with the SEC, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus. This regulatory framework is intended primarily for the protection of depositors and the deposit insurance funds that insure deposits of banks, rather than for the protection of security

holders. A change in the statutes, regulations or regulatory policies applicable to us or our subsidiaries may have a material effect on our business.

Changes to the laws and regulations can affect the operating environment of savings and loan holding companies and their subsidiaries in substantial and unpredictable ways. We cannot accurately predict whether those changes in laws and regulations will occur, and, if those changes occur, the ultimate effect they would have upon our or our subsidiaries' financial condition or results of operations.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SECURITIES**

This prospectus contains a summary of the senior debt securities, the subordinated debt securities, the common stock and the preferred stock. The following summaries are not meant to be a complete description of each security. However, this prospectus, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying pricing supplement, if applicable, contain the material terms and conditions for each security. You should read these documents as well as the documents filed as exhibits to or incorporated by reference to this registration statement. Capitalized terms used in this prospectus that are not defined will have the meanings given them in these documents.

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### **DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES**

We may issue senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities. Senior debt securities will be issued under an indenture, the senior indenture, between us and Wilmington Trust Company, as senior indenture trustee. Subordinated debt securities will be issued under a separate indenture, the subordinated indenture, between us and Wilmington Trust Company, as subordinated indenture trustee. The senior indenture and the subordinated indenture are sometimes collectively referred to in this prospectus as the indentures. The indentures will be subject to and governed by the Trust Indenture Act of 1939. A copy of the form of each of these indentures is an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. This prospectus describes the general terms and provisions of the debt securities. When we offer to sell a particular series of debt securities, we will describe the specific terms of the securities in a supplement to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement will also indicate whether the general terms and provisions described in this prospectus apply to a particular series of debt securities.

The following briefly describes the general terms and provisions of the debt securities and the indentures governing them which may be offered. The particular terms of the debt securities offered, and the extent, if any, to which these general provisions may apply to the debt securities so offered, will be described in a prospectus supplement relating to those securities. The following descriptions of the indentures are not complete and are subject to, and are qualified in their entirety by reference to, all the provisions of the respective indentures.

#### **General**

The indentures permit us to issue the debt securities from time to time, without limitation as to aggregate principal amount, and in one or more series. The indentures also do not limit or otherwise restrict the amount of other indebtedness which we may incur or other securities which we or our subsidiaries may issue, including indebtedness which may rank senior to the debt securities. Nothing in the subordinated indenture prohibits the issuance of securities representing subordinated indebtedness that is senior or junior to the subordinated debt securities.

Unless we give you different information in the prospectus supplement, the senior debt securities will be unsubordinated obligations and will rank equally with all of our other unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness. Payments on the subordinated debt securities will be subordinated to the prior payment in full of all of our senior indebtedness, as described under *Description of Debt Securities Subordination* and in the applicable prospectus supplement.

We may issue debt securities if the conditions contained in the applicable indenture are satisfied. These conditions include the adoption of resolutions by our board of directors that establish the terms of the debt securities being issued. Any resolution approving the issuance of any issue of debt securities will include the terms of that issue of debt securities, which may include:

the title and series designation;

the aggregate principal amount and the limit, if any, on the aggregate principal amount or initial issue price of the debt securities which may be issued under the applicable indenture;

the principal amount payable, whether at maturity or upon earlier acceleration;

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whether the principal amount payable will be determined with reference to an index, formula or other method which may be based on one or more currencies, currency units, composite currencies, commodities, equity indices or other indices;

whether the debt securities will be issued as original issue discount securities (as defined below);

the date or dates on which the principal of the debt securities is payable;

any fixed or variable interest rate or rates per annum or the method or formula for determining an interest rate;

the date from which any interest will accrue;

any interest payment dates;

whether the debt securities are senior or subordinated, and if subordinated, the terms of the subordination;

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the price or prices at which the debt securities will be issued, which may be expressed as a percentage of the aggregate principal amount of those debt securities;

the stated maturity date;

whether the debt securities are to be issued in global form;

any sinking fund requirements;

any provisions for redemption, the redemption price and any remarketing arrangements;

the denominations of the securities or series of securities;

whether the debt securities are denominated or payable in United States dollars or a foreign currency or units of two or more foreign currencies;

any restrictions on the offer, sale and delivery of the debt securities;

the place or places where payments or deliveries on the debt securities will be made and may be presented for registration of transfer or exchange;

whether any of the debt securities will be subject to defeasance in advance of the date for redemption or the stated maturity date;

the terms, if any, upon which the debt securities are convertible into other securities of ours or another issuer and the terms and conditions upon which any conversion will be effected, including the initial conversion price or rate, the conversion period and any other provisions in addition to or instead of those described in this prospectus;

any other terms of the debt securities which are not inconsistent with the provisions of the applicable indenture;

a description of any documents or certificates that must be received prior to the issuance of any definitive securities;

whether and under what circumstances additional amounts will be paid to non-U.S. citizens in connection with any tax, assessment or governmental charge and whether securities may be redeemed in lieu of paying such additional fees;

the identity of each security registrar or paying agent (if other than trustee);

any provisions granting special rights to securities holders upon the occurrence of specified events;

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any deletions from, modifications of, or additions to any default events or covenants set forth in the form of indenture;

the portion of the principal amount payable upon the declaration of acceleration of the maturity of any securities; and

the date any bearer securities of or within the series and any temporary global security representing outstanding securities shall be dated, if other than date of original issuance.

The debt securities may be issued as original issue discount securities which bear no interest or interest at a rate which at the time of issuance is below market rates and which will be sold at a substantial discount below their principal amount. If the maturity of any original issue discount security is accelerated, the amount payable to the holder of the security will be determined by the applicable prospectus supplement, the terms of the security and the relevant indenture, but may be an amount less than the amount payable at the maturity of the principal of that original issue discount security. Special federal income tax and other considerations relating to original issue discount securities will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Please see the prospectus supplement or pricing supplement you have received or will receive for the terms of the specific debt securities we are offering.

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You should be aware that special U.S. Federal income tax, accounting and other considerations may apply to the debt securities. The prospectus supplement relating to an issue of debt securities will describe these considerations.

## **Registration and Transfer**

Holders may present debt securities in registered form for transfer or exchange for other debt securities of the same series at the offices of the applicable indenture trustee according to the terms of the applicable indenture and the debt securities.

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, the debt securities will be issued in fully registered form, and in denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof and the bearer securities of such series other than bearer securities issued in global form shall be issuable in denominations of \$5,000.

No service charge will be required for any transfer or exchange of the debt securities but we may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or other governmental charge payable in connection with any transfer or exchange.

## **Payment and Place of Payment**

We will pay or deliver principal and any premium and interest in the manner, at the places and subject to the restrictions set forth in the applicable indenture, the debt securities and the applicable prospectus supplement. However, at our option, we may pay any interest by check mailed to the holders of registered debt securities at their registered addresses.

## **Global Securities**

Each indenture provides that we may issue debt securities in global form. If any series of debt securities is issued in global form, the prospectus supplement will describe any circumstances under which beneficial owners of interests in any of those global debt securities may exchange their interests for debt securities of that series and of like tenor and principal amount in any authorized form and denomination.

## **Events of Default**

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, the following are events of default under the senior indenture with respect to the senior debt securities and under the subordinated indenture with respect to the subordinated debt securities:

default in the payment of any principal or premium or make-whole amount, if any, on the debt securities when due;

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default in the payment of any interest on the debt securities, or of any coupon pertaining thereto, when due, which continues for 30 days;

default in the deposit of any sinking fund payment on the debt securities when due;

default in the performance or breach of any other obligation contained in the applicable indenture for the benefit of that series of debt securities (other than defaults or breaches otherwise specifically addressed), which continues for 60 days after written notice of the default or breach;

default in the payment of any of our other indebtedness of the Company or the indebtedness of any subsidiary for which the Company is responsible or which the Company has guaranteed (whether currently existing or created in the future) having a principal amount outstanding that exceeds the minimum amount set forth in any indenture supplement which results in acceleration of that indebtedness and such acceleration has not been rescinded or annulled within 30 days of the related declaration of default;

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specified events in bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of the Company or any significant subsidiary of the Company; and

any other event of default provided with respect to the debt securities of any series.

If an event of default (other than an event of default arising from specified events in bankruptcy of the Company or any significant subsidiary) occurs and is continuing for any series of debt securities, the indenture trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in aggregate principal amount or, under certain circumstances, issue price of the outstanding debt securities of that series may declare all amounts, or any lesser amount provided for in the debt securities of that series, to be immediately due and payable.

At any time after the applicable indenture trustee or the holders have accelerated a series of debt securities, but before the applicable indenture trustee has obtained a judgment or decree for payment of money due, the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of outstanding debt securities of that series may rescind and annul that acceleration and its consequences, provided that all payments and/or deliveries due, other than those due as a result of acceleration, have been made and all events of default have been remedied or waived.

The holders of a majority in principal amount or aggregate issue price of the outstanding debt securities of any series may waive any default with respect to that series, except a default:

in the payment of any amounts due and payable or deliverable under the debt securities of that series; or

in an obligation contained in, or a provision of, an indenture which cannot be modified under the terms of that indenture without the consent of each holder of each series of debt securities affected.

The holders of a majority in principal amount or, under certain circumstances, issue price of the outstanding debt securities of a series may direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the applicable indenture trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the indenture trustee with respect to debt securities of that series, provided that any direction is not in conflict with any rule of law or the applicable indenture and the trustee may take other actions, other than those that might lead to personal liability, not inconsistent with the direction. Subject to the provisions of the applicable indenture relating to the duties of the indenture trustee, before proceeding to exercise any right or power under the indenture at the direction of the holders, the indenture trustee is entitled to receive from those holders reasonable security or indemnity against the costs, expenses and liabilities which it might incur in complying with any direction.

A holder of any debt security of any series will have the right to institute a proceeding with respect to the applicable indenture or for any remedy under the indenture, if:

that holder previously gives to the indenture trustee written notice of a continuing event of default with respect to debt securities of that series;

the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding securities of that series have made written request and offered the indenture trustee indemnity satisfactory to the indenture trustee to institute that proceeding as indenture trustee;

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the indenture trustee will not have received from the holders of a majority in principal amount or, under certain circumstances, issue price of the outstanding debt securities of that series a direction inconsistent with the request; and

the indenture trustee fails to institute the proceeding within 60 days.

However, the holder of any debt security or coupon has the right to receive payment of the principal of (and premium or make-whole amount, if any) and interest on, and any additional amounts in respect of, such debt security or payment of such coupon on the respective due dates (or, in the case of redemption, on the redemption date) and to institute suit for the enforcement of any such payment.

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We are required to furnish to the indenture trustees annually a statement as to the performance of our obligations under the indentures and as to any default in that performance.

### **Modification and Waiver**

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable indenture supplement, the Company and the applicable indenture trustee may amend and modify each indenture or debt securities under that indenture with the consent of holders of at least a majority in principal amount or, under certain circumstances, issue price of each series of all outstanding debt securities then outstanding under the indenture affected. However, without the consent of each holder of any debt security issued under the applicable indenture, we may not amend or modify that indenture to:

change the stated maturity date of the principal of (or premium or make-whole amount, if any, on), or any installment of principal or interest on, any debt security issued under that indenture;

reduce the principal amount of or any make-whole amount, the rate of interest on or any additional amounts payable in respect thereof, or any premium payable upon the redemption of any debt security issued under that indenture;

reduce the amount of principal of an original issue discount security or make-whole amount, if any, issued under that indenture payable upon acceleration of its maturity; or provable in bankruptcy or adversely affect any right of repayment of a debt security;

change the place or currency of payment of principal or any premium or any make-whole amount or interest on, any debt security issued under that indenture;

impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment or delivery on or with respect to any debt security issued under that indenture;

reduce the percentage in principal amount of debt securities of any series issued under that indenture, the consent of whose holders is required to modify or amend the indenture or to waive compliance with certain provisions of the indenture; or

make any change that adversely affects the right to convert or exchange any security or decrease the conversion/exchange rate or increase the conversion/exchange price.

The holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series issued under that indenture may, with respect to that series, waive past defaults under the indenture, except as described under *Events of Default*.

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we and the applicable indenture trustee may also amend and modify each indenture without the consent of any holder for any of the following purposes:

to evidence the succession of another person to the Company;

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to add to our covenants for the benefit of the holders of all or any series of debt securities;

to add events of default for the benefit of the holders of all or any series of debt securities;

to add or change any provisions of the indentures to facilitate the issuance of bearer securities;

to change or eliminate any of the provisions of the applicable indenture in respect of any series of debt securities, so long as any such change or elimination will become effective only in respect of any series of securities when there is no outstanding security of that series which is entitled to the benefit of that provision;

to establish the form or terms of debt securities of any series;

to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment by a successor indenture trustee;

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to cure any ambiguity, to correct or supplement any provision in the applicable indenture, or to make any other provisions with respect to matters or questions arising under that indenture, so long as the interests of holders of debt securities of any series are not adversely affected in any material respect by the actions taken to cure, correct or supplement a provision in an indenture;

to secure securities;

to provide for conversion rights of the holders of the debt securities of any series to enable those holders to convert those securities into other securities;

to close the indenture with respect to the authentication and delivery of additional series of securities or to qualify or maintain qualifications of the applicable indenture under the Trust Indenture Act; or

to supplement any of the provisions of an indenture as is necessary to permit or facilitate the defeasance or discharge of any series of securities under specified provisions of the indenture, provided that any such action shall not adversely affect the interests of the holders of securities of such series or any other series of securities under the indenture in any material respect.

## **Voting**

The indentures contain provisions for convening meetings of the holders of debt securities of a series. A meeting will be permitted to be called at any time by the applicable trustee, and also, upon request, by us or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of such series, in any such case upon notice given as provided in such indenture. Except for any consent that must be given by the holder of each debt security affected by the modifications and amendments of an indenture described above, any resolution presented at a meeting or adjourned meeting duly reconvened at which a quorum is present may be adopted by the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series represented at such meeting.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, except as referred to above, any resolution relating to a request, demand, authorization, direction, notice, consent, waiver or other action that may be made, given or taken by the holders of a specified percentage, which is less than a majority, of the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series may be adopted at a meeting or adjourned meeting duly reconvened at which a quorum is present by the affirmative vote of such specified percentage.

Any resolution passed or decision taken at any properly held meeting of holders of debt securities of any series will be binding on all holders of such series. The quorum at any meeting called to adopt a resolution, and at any reconvened meeting, will be persons holding or representing a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series. However, if any action is to be taken relating to a consent or waiver which may be given by the holders of at least a specified percentage in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series, the persons holding such percentage will constitute a quorum.

Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the indentures provide that if any action is to be taken at a meeting with respect to any request, demand, authorization, direction, notice, consent, waiver and other action that such indenture expressly provides may be made, given or taken by the holders of a specified percentage in principal amount of all outstanding debt securities affected by such action, or of the holders of such series and one or more additional series:

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there shall be no minimum quorum requirement for such meeting; and

the principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of such series that vote in favor of such request, demand, authorization, direction, notice, consent, waiver or other action shall be taken into account in determining whether such request, demand, authorization, direction, notice, consent, waiver or other action has been made, given or taken under such indenture.

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### **Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets**

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may consolidate or merge with or into any other corporation, and we may sell, lease or convey all or substantially all of our assets to any corporation, provided that the resulting corporation, if other than the Company, is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the United States of America or any U.S. state and assumes all of our obligations to:

- (1) pay or deliver the principal and any premium or make-whole amount, if any, and any interest on, the debt securities;
- (2) perform and observe all of our other obligations under the indentures and supplemental indentures; and
- (3) we are not, or any successor corporation, as the case may be, is not, immediately after any consolidation or merger, in default under the indentures.

The indentures do not provide for any right of acceleration in the event of a consolidation, merger, sale of all or substantially all of the assets, recapitalization or change in our stock ownership. In addition, the indentures do not contain any provision which would protect the holders of debt securities against a sudden and dramatic decline in credit quality resulting from takeovers, recapitalizations or similar restructurings.

### **Regarding the Indenture Trustee**

The indenture trustee provides trust services to us and our affiliates in connection with certain trust preferred securities and related junior subordinated debentures that we currently have outstanding.

The occurrence of any default under either the senior indenture, the subordinated indenture or the indenture between the Company and the indenture trustee relating to our junior subordinated debentures could create a conflicting interest for the indenture trustee under the Trust Indenture Act. If that default has not been cured or waived within 90 days after the indenture trustee has or acquired a conflicting interest, the indenture trustee would generally be required by the Trust Indenture Act to eliminate that conflicting interest or resign as indenture trustee with respect to the debt securities issued under the senior indenture or the subordinated indenture, or with respect to the junior subordinated debentures issued to certain Delaware statutory trusts of ours under a separate indenture. If the indenture trustee resigns, we are required to promptly appoint a successor trustee with respect to the affected securities.

The Trust Indenture Act also imposes certain limitations on the right of the indenture trustee, as a creditor of ours, to obtain payment of claims in certain cases, or to realize on certain property received in respect to any cash claim or otherwise. The indenture trustee will be permitted to engage in other transactions with us, provided that, if it acquires a conflicting interest within the meaning of Section 310 of the Trust Indenture Act, it must generally either eliminate that conflict or resign.

**International Offering**

If specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may issue debt securities outside the United States. Those debt securities will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement. In connection with any offering outside the United States, we will designate paying agents, registrars or other agents with respect to the debt securities, as specified in the applicable prospectus supplement.

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement whether our debt securities issued outside the United States: (1) may be subject to certain selling restrictions; (2) may be listed on one or more foreign stock exchanges; and (3) may have special United States tax and other considerations applicable to an offering outside the United States.

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### **Defeasance**

We may terminate or defease our obligations under the senior indenture with respect to the senior debt securities of any series by taking the following steps:

(1) depositing irrevocably with the senior indenture trustee an amount, which through the payment of interest, principal or premium, if any, will provide an amount sufficient to pay the entire amount of the senior debt securities:

in the case of senior debt securities denominated in U.S. dollars, U.S. dollars or U.S. government obligations;

in the case of senior debt securities denominated in a foreign currency, of money in that foreign currency or foreign government obligations of the foreign government or governments issuing that foreign currency; or

a combination of money and U.S. government obligations or foreign government obligations, as applicable;

(2) delivering:

an opinion of independent counsel that the holders of the senior debt securities of that series will have no federal income tax consequences as a result of that deposit and termination;

an opinion of independent counsel that registration is not required under Investment Company Act of 1940;

an opinion of counsel as to certain other matters;

officers certificates certifying as to compliance with the senior indenture and other matters; and

(3) paying all amounts due under the senior indenture.

Further, the defeasance cannot cause an event of default under the senior indenture or any other agreement or instrument and no default under the senior indenture or any such other agreement or instrument can exist at the time the defeasance occurs.

### **Subordination**

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The subordinated debt securities will be subordinated in right of payment to all senior debt, as defined in the subordinated indenture. In certain circumstances relating to our liquidation, dissolution, receivership, reorganization, insolvency or similar proceedings, the holders of all senior debt will first be entitled to receive payment in full before the holders of the subordinated debt securities will be entitled to receive any payment on the subordinated debt securities.

If the maturity of any subordinated debt securities is accelerated, we will have to repay all senior debt before we can make any payment on the subordinated debt securities.

In addition, we may make no payment on the subordinated debt securities in the event:

there is an event of default with respect to any senior indebtedness which permits the holders of that senior indebtedness to accelerate the maturity of the senior indebtedness; and

the default is the subject of judicial proceedings or we receive notice of the default from an authorized person under the subordinated indenture.

By reason of this subordination in favor of the holders of senior indebtedness, in the event of an insolvency our creditors who are not holders of senior indebtedness or the subordinated debt securities may recover less,

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proportionately, than holders of senior indebtedness and may recover more, proportionately, than holders of the subordinated debt securities. Unless otherwise specified in the prospectus supplement relating to the particular series of subordinated debt securities, senior debt is defined in the subordinated indenture as:

the principal, premium, if any, unpaid interest (including interest accruing on or after the filing of any petition in bankruptcy or for reorganization relating to the Company whether or not a claim for post-filing interest is allowed in such proceeding), fees, charges, expenses, reimbursement and indemnification obligations, and all other amounts payable under or in respect of the following indebtedness of the Company for money borrowed, whether any such indebtedness exists as of the date of the indenture or is created, incurred, assumed or guaranteed after such date:

(i) any debt (a) for money borrowed by the Company, or (b) evidenced by a bond, note, debenture, or similar instrument (including purchase money obligations) given in connection with the acquisition of any business, property or assets, whether by purchase, merger, consolidation or otherwise, but shall not include any account payable or other obligation created or assumed in the ordinary course of business in connection with the obtaining of materials or services, or (c) which is a direct or indirect obligation which arises as a result of banker's acceptances or bank letters of credit issued to secure obligations of the Company, or to secure the payment of revenue bonds issued for the benefit of the Company whether contingent or otherwise;

(ii) any debt of others described in the preceding clause (i) which the Company has guaranteed or for which it is otherwise liable;

(iii) the obligation of the Company as lessee under any lease of property which is reflected on the Company's balance sheet as a capitalized lease; and

(iv) any deferral, amendment, renewal, extension, supplement or refunding of any liability of the kind described in any of the preceding clauses (i), (ii) and (iii).

Senior debt does not include:

(1) any such indebtedness, obligation or liability referred to in clauses (i) through (iv) above as to which, in the instrument creating or evidencing the same or pursuant to which the same is outstanding, it is provided that such indebtedness, obligation or liability is not superior in right of payment to the subordinated debt securities, or ranks pari passu with the subordinated debt securities, (2) any such indebtedness, obligation or liability which is subordinated to indebtedness of the Company to substantially the same extent as or to a greater extent than the subordinated debt securities are subordinated, (3) any indebtedness to a subsidiary of the Company and (4) the subordinated debt securities.

The subordinated indenture does not limit or prohibit the incurrence of additional senior indebtedness, which may include indebtedness that is senior to the subordinated debt securities, but subordinate to our other obligations. Any prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of subordinated debt securities will set forth the aggregate amount of our indebtedness senior to the subordinated debt securities as of a recent practicable date.

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The prospectus supplement may further describe the provisions, if any, which may apply to the subordination of the subordinated debt securities of a particular series.

### **Restrictive Covenants**

The subordinated indenture does not contain any significant restrictive covenants. The prospectus supplement relating to a series of subordinated debt securities may describe certain restrictive covenants, if any, to which we may be bound under the subordinated indenture.

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**DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK**

**Company**

Berkshire Hills Bancorp, which is incorporated under the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, is authorized to issue 26,000,000 shares of its common stock, \$0.01 par value, of which 8,665,081 shares were issued and outstanding as of September 7, 2006. Berkshire Hills Bancorp is also authorized to issue 1,000,000 shares of its preferred stock, \$0.01 par value, of which none have been issued as of September 7, 2006. Berkshire Hills Bancorp's board of directors may at any time, without additional approval of the holders of preferred stock or common stock, issue additional authorized shares of preferred stock or common stock.

**Voting Rights**

The holders of common stock are entitled to one vote per share on all matters presented to stockholders. Holders of common stock are not entitled to cumulate their votes in the election of directors. However, Berkshire Hills Bancorp's Certificate of Incorporation provides that a record owner of Berkshire Hills Bancorp's common stock who beneficially owns, either directly or indirectly, in excess of 10% of Berkshire Hills Bancorp's outstanding shares, is not entitled to any vote in respect of the shares held in excess of the 10% limit.

**No Preemptive or Conversion Rights**

The holders of common stock do not have preemptive rights to subscribe for a proportionate share of any additional securities issued by Berkshire Hills Bancorp before such securities are offered to others. The absence of preemptive rights increases Berkshire Hills Bancorp's flexibility to issue additional shares of common stock in connection with Berkshire Hills Bancorp's acquisitions, employee benefit plans and for other purposes, without affording the holders of common stock a right to subscribe for their proportionate share of those additional securities. The holders of common stock are not entitled to any redemption privileges, sinking fund privileges or conversion rights.

**Dividends**

Holders of common stock are entitled to receive dividends ratably when, as and if declared by Berkshire Hills Bancorp's board of directors from assets legally available therefor, after payment of all dividends on preferred stock, if any is outstanding. Under Delaware law, Berkshire Hills Bancorp may pay dividends out of surplus or net profits for the fiscal year in which declared and/or for the preceding fiscal year, even if our surplus accounts are in a deficit position. Dividends paid by our subsidiary bank and proceeds received from the offering of trust preferred securities have historically been the primary source of funds available to Berkshire Hills Bancorp. Berkshire Hills Bancorp expects to use these sources of funds in the future, as well as proceeds it may obtain from the offering of common stock, preferred stock and/or debt securities for payment of dividends to our stockholders, the repurchase of our common stock and for other needs. Berkshire Hills Bancorp's board of directors intends to maintain its present policy of paying regular quarterly cash dividends. The declaration and amount of future dividends will depend on circumstances existing at the time, including Berkshire Hills Bancorp's earnings, financial condition and capital requirements, as well as regulatory limitations and such other factors as Berkshire Hills Bancorp's board of directors deems relevant. See *Regulation and Supervision*.

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Berkshire Hills Bancorp's principal assets and sources of income consist of investments in our operating subsidiaries, which are separate and distinct legal entities.

### **Liquidation**

Upon liquidation, dissolution or the winding up of the affairs of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, holders of common stock are entitled to receive their pro rata portion of the remaining assets of Berkshire Hills Bancorp after the holders of Berkshire Hills Bancorp's preferred stock, if any, have been paid in full any sums to which they may be entitled.

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### **Certain Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaw Provisions Affecting Stock**

Berkshire Hills Bancorp's Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws contain several provisions that may make Berkshire Hills Bancorp a less attractive target for an acquisition of control by anyone who does not have the support of Berkshire Hills Bancorp's board of directors. Such provisions include, among other things, the requirement of a supermajority vote of stockholders or directors to approve certain business combinations and other corporate actions, a minimum price provision, several special procedural rules, a staggered board of directors, a vote limitation provision and the limitation that stockholder actions may only be taken at a meeting and may not be taken by unanimous written stockholder consent. The foregoing is qualified in its entirety by reference to Berkshire Hills Bancorp's Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws, both of which are on file with the SEC.

### **Restrictions on Ownership**

Under the federal Change in Bank Control Act, a notice must be submitted to the Office of Thrift Supervision if any person (including a company), or group acting in concert, seeks to acquire control of a savings and loan holding company or savings association. An acquisition of control can occur upon the acquisition of 10.0% or more of the voting stock of a savings and loan holding company or savings institution or as otherwise defined by the Office of Thrift Supervision. Under the Change in Bank Control Act, the Office of Thrift Supervision has 60 days from the filing of a complete notice to act, taking into consideration certain factors, including the financial and managerial resources of the acquirer and the anti-trust effects of the acquisition. Any company that so acquires control would then be subject to regulation as a savings and loan holding company.

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**DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK**

The following summary contains a description of the general terms of the preferred stock that we may issue. The specific terms of any series of preferred stock will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to that series of preferred stock. The terms of any series of preferred stock may differ from the terms described below. Certain provisions of the preferred stock described below and in any prospectus supplement are not complete. You should refer to the amendment to our Certificate of Incorporation or the Certificate of Designation, with respect to the establishment of a series of preferred stock which will be filed with the SEC in connection with the offering of such series of preferred stock.

**General**

Our Certificate of Incorporation permits our board of directors to authorize the issuance of up to 1,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.01, in one or more series, without stockholder action. The board of directors can fix the designation, powers, preferences and rights of each series. Therefore, without stockholder approval, our board of directors can authorize the issuance of preferred stock with voting, dividend, liquidation and conversion and other rights that could dilute the voting power of the common stock and may assist management in impeding any unfriendly takeover or attempted change in control. None of our preferred stock is currently outstanding.

The preferred stock has the terms described below unless otherwise provided in the prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of the preferred stock. You should read the prospectus supplement relating to the particular series of the preferred stock being offered for specific terms, including:

the designation and stated value per share of the preferred stock and the number of shares offered;

the amount of liquidation preference per share;

the price at which the preferred stock will be issued;

the dividend rate, or method of calculation, the dates on which dividends will be payable, whether dividends will be cumulative or noncumulative and, if cumulative, the dates from which dividends will commence to accumulate;

any redemption or sinking fund provisions;

any conversion provisions; and

any other rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions on the preferred stock.

The preferred stock will, when issued, be fully paid and nonassessable. Unless otherwise specified in the prospectus supplement, each series of the preferred stock will rank equally as to dividends and liquidation rights in all respects with each other series of preferred stock. The rights of holders of shares of each series of preferred stock will be subordinate to those of our general creditors.

We may, at our option, with respect to any series of the preferred stock, elect to offer fractional interests in shares of preferred stock. The fractional interest will be specified in the prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of the preferred stock.

**Rank**

Any series of the preferred stock will, with respect to the priority of the payment of dividends and the priority of payments upon liquidation, winding up and dissolution, rank:

senior to all classes of common stock and all equity securities issued by us the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities will rank junior to the preferred stock (the junior securities);

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equally with all equity securities issued by us the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities will rank equally with the preferred stock (the parity securities); and

junior to all equity securities issued by us the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities will rank senior to the preferred stock.

## **Dividends**

Holders of the preferred stock of each series will be entitled to receive, when, as and if declared by our board of directors, cash dividends at such rates and on such dates described, if any, in the prospectus supplement. Different series of preferred stock may be entitled to dividends at different rates or based on different methods of calculation. The dividend rate may be fixed or variable or both. Dividends will be payable to the holders of record as they appear on our stock books on record dates fixed by our board of directors, as specified in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Dividends on any series of the preferred stock may be cumulative or noncumulative, as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. If our board of directors does not declare a dividend payable on a dividend payment date on any series of noncumulative preferred stock, then the holders of that noncumulative preferred stock will have no right to receive a dividend for that dividend payment date, and we will have no obligation to pay the dividend accrued for that period, whether or not dividends on that series are declared payable on any future dividend payment dates. Dividends on any series of cumulative preferred stock will accrue from the date we initially issue shares of such series or such other date specified in the applicable prospectus supplement.

No full dividends may be declared or paid or funds set apart for the payment of any dividends on any parity securities unless dividends have been paid or set apart for payment on the preferred stock. If full dividends are not paid, the preferred stock will share dividends pro rata with the parity securities. No dividends may be declared or paid or funds set apart for the payment of dividends on any junior securities unless full cumulative dividends for all dividend periods terminating on or prior to the date of the declaration or payment will have been paid or declared and a sum sufficient for the payment set apart for payment on the preferred stock.

Our ability to pay dividends on our preferred stock is subject to policies established by the Office of Thrift Supervision.

## **Rights Upon Liquidation**

If we dissolve, liquidate or wind up our affairs, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the holders of each series of preferred stock will be entitled to receive, before any payment or distribution of assets is made to holders of junior securities, liquidating distributions in the amount described in the prospectus supplement relating to that series of the preferred stock, plus an amount equal to accrued and unpaid dividends and, if the series of the preferred stock is cumulative, for all dividend periods prior to that point in time. If the amounts payable with respect to the preferred stock of any series and any other parity securities are not paid in full, the holders of the preferred stock of that series and of the parity securities will share proportionately in the distribution of our assets in proportion to the full liquidation preferences to which they are entitled. After the holders of preferred stock and the parity securities are paid in full, they will have no right or claim to any of our remaining assets.

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Because we are a savings and loan holding company, our rights, the rights of our creditors and of our stockholders, including the holders of the preferred stock offered by this prospectus, to participate in the assets of any subsidiary upon the subsidiary's liquidation or recapitalization may be subject to the prior claims of the subsidiary's creditors except to the extent that we may ourselves be a creditor with recognized claims against the subsidiary.

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### **Redemption**

We may provide that a series of the preferred stock may be redeemable, in whole or in part, at our option with prior Office of Thrift Supervision approval. In addition, a series of preferred stock may be subject to mandatory redemption pursuant to a sinking fund or otherwise. The redemption provisions that may apply to a series of preferred stock, including the redemption dates and the redemption prices for that series, will be described in the prospectus supplement.

In the event of partial redemptions of preferred stock, whether by mandatory or optional redemption, our board of directors will determine the method for selecting the shares to be redeemed, which may be by lot or pro rata or by any other method determined to be equitable.

On or after a redemption date, unless we default in the payment of the redemption price, dividends will cease to accrue on shares of preferred stock called for redemption. In addition, all rights of holders of the shares will terminate except for the right to receive the redemption price.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement for any series of preferred stock, if any dividends on any other series of preferred stock ranking equally as to payment of dividends and liquidation rights with such series of preferred stock are in arrears, no shares of any such series of preferred stock may be redeemed, whether by mandatory or optional redemption, unless all shares of preferred stock are redeemed, and we will not purchase any shares of such series of preferred stock. This requirement, however, will not prevent us from acquiring such shares pursuant to a purchase or exchange offer made on the same terms to holders of all such shares outstanding.

### **Voting Rights**

Unless otherwise described in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the preferred stock will have no voting rights except as otherwise required by law or in our articles of organization.

Under regulations adopted by the Office of Thrift Supervision, if the holders of any series of the preferred stock are or become entitled to vote for the election of directors, such series may then be deemed a class of voting securities and a holder of 10% or more of such series, may then be subject to regulation as a savings and loan holding company. In addition, at such time as such series is deemed a class of voting securities, (a) any other holding company may be required to obtain the approval of the Office of Thrift Supervision to acquire or retain 5% or more of that series and (b) any person other than a savings and loan holding company may be required to obtain the approval of the Office of Thrift Supervision to acquire or retain 10% or more of that series.

### **Exchangeability**

We may provide that the holders of shares of preferred stock of any series may be required at any time or at maturity to exchange those shares for our debt securities. The applicable prospectus supplement will specify the terms of any such exchange.



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**PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION**

We may sell our securities in any of three ways (or in any combination):

through underwriters or dealers;

directly to a limited number of purchasers or to a single purchaser; or

through agents.

Each time that we use this prospectus to sell our securities, we will also provide a prospectus supplement that contains the specific terms of the offering. The prospectus supplement will set forth the terms of the offering of such stock, including:

the name or names of any underwriters, dealers or agents and the type and amounts of securities underwritten or purchased by each of them; and

the public offering price of the securities and the proceeds to us and any discounts, commissions or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers.

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

If underwriters are used in the sale of any securities, the securities will be acquired by the underwriters for their own account and may be resold from time to time in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions, at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. The securities may be either offered to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters, or directly by underwriters. Generally, the underwriters' obligations to purchase the securities will be subject to certain conditions precedent. The underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of the securities if they purchase any of the securities.

We may sell the securities through agents from time to time. The prospectus supplement will name any agent involved in the offer or sale of our 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 our securities at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The contracts will be subject only to those conditions set forth in the prospectus supplement, and the prospectus supplement will set forth any commissions or discounts we pay for solicitation of these contracts.

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Agents and underwriters may be entitled to indemnification by us against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or to contribution with respect to payments which the agents or underwriters may be required to make in respect thereof. Agents and underwriters may be customers of, engage in transactions with, or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business.

We may enter into derivative transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. If the applicable prospectus supplement indicates in connection with those derivatives then the third parties may sell securities covered by this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, including in short sale transactions. If so, the third party may use securities pledged by us or borrowed from us or others to settle those sales or to close out any related open borrowings of stock, and may use securities received from us in settlement of those derivatives to close out any related open borrowings of securities. The third party in such sale transactions will be an underwriter and will be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement (or a post-effective amendment).

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**LEGAL OPINION**

The validity of the securities offered hereby will be passed upon for us by Muldoon Murphy & Aguggia LLP, Washington, D.C.

**EXPERTS**

The consolidated financial statements of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. and its subsidiaries as of December 31, 2005 and 2004, and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2005, and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2005, have been incorporated by reference into this document in reliance upon the respective reports of Wolf & Company, P.C., independent registered public accounting firm, which are incorporated by reference herein and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

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**Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc.**

**Up to a Maximum Aggregate Offering Price of**

**\$125,000,000**

**Debt Securities**

**Common Stock**

**Preferred Stock**

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**Prospectus**

**•, 2006**

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

The expenses in connection with the issuance and distribution of the securities being registered, other than underwriting compensation, are set forth in the following table (all amounts except the registration fee are estimated):

|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Filing Fee for Registration Statement | \$ 13,375  |
| Listing Fees                          | 50,000     |
| Legal Fees and Expenses               | 200,000    |
| Blue Sky Expenses                     | 20,000     |
| Accounting Fees and Expenses          | 60,000     |
| Printing and Engraving Fees           | 50,000     |
| Trustee s expenses                    | 20,000     |
| Fees of rating agencies               | 25,000     |
| Miscellaneous                         | 61,625     |
|                                       | <hr/>      |
| Total                                 | \$ 500,000 |
|                                       | <hr/>      |

**Item 15. *Indemnification of Directors and Officers.***

In accordance with the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware (being Chapter 1 of Title 8 of the Delaware Code), Articles 10 and 11 of Berkshire Hills Bancorp s Certificate of Incorporation provide as follows:

**TENTH:**

A. Each person who was or is made a party or is threatened to be made a party to or is otherwise involved in any action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (hereinafter a proceeding ), by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a Director or an Officer of the Corporation or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, Officer, employee or agent of another corporation or of a partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, including service with respect to an employee benefit plan (hereinafter an indemnitee ), whether the basis of such proceeding is alleged action in an official capacity as a Director, Officer, employee or agent, or in any other capacity while serving as a Director, Officer, employee or agent, shall be indemnified and held harmless by the Corporation to the fullest extent authorized by the Delaware General Corporation Law, as the same exists or may hereafter be amended (but, in the case of any such amendment, only to the extent that such amendment permits the Corporation to provide broader indemnification rights than such law permitted the Corporation to provide prior to such amendment), against all expense, liability and loss (including attorneys fees, judgments, fines, ERISA excise taxes or penalties and amounts paid in settlement) reasonably incurred or suffered by such indemnitee in connection therewith; provided, however, that, except as provided in Section C hereof with respect to proceedings to enforce rights to indemnification, the Corporation shall indemnify any such indemnitee in connection with a proceeding (or part thereof) initiated by such indemnitee only if such proceeding (or part thereof) was authorized by the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

B. The right to indemnification conferred in Section A of this Article TENTH shall include the right to be paid by the Corporation the expenses incurred in defending any such proceeding in advance of its final disposition (hereinafter an advancement of expenses ); provided, however, that, if the Delaware General Corporation Law requires, an advancement of expenses incurred by an indemnitee in his or her capacity as a Director or Officer (and not in any other capacity in which service was or is rendered by such indemnitee, including, without limitation, services to an employee benefit plan) shall be made only upon delivery to the Corporation of an undertaking (hereinafter an undertaking ), by or on behalf of such indemnitee, to repay all amounts so advanced if it shall ultimately be determined by final judicial decision from which there is no further right to appeal (hereinafter a final adjudication ) that such indemnitee is not entitled to be indemnified for such

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expenses under this Section or otherwise. The rights to indemnification and to the advancement of expenses conferred in Sections A and B of this Article TENTH shall be contract rights and such rights shall continue as to an indemnitee who has ceased to be a Director, Officer, employee or agent and shall inure to the benefit of the indemnitee's heirs, executors and administrators.

C. If a claim under Section A or B of this Article TENTH is not paid in full by the Corporation within sixty days after a written claim has been received by the Corporation, except in the case of a claim for an advancement of expenses, in which case the applicable period shall be twenty days, the indemnitee may at any time thereafter bring suit against the Corporation to recover the unpaid amount of the claim. If successful in whole or in part in any such suit, or in a suit brought by the Corporation to recover an advancement of expenses pursuant to the terms of an undertaking, the indemnitee shall be entitled to be paid also the expenses of prosecuting or defending such suit. In (i) any suit brought by the indemnitee to enforce a right to indemnification hereunder (but not in a suit brought by the indemnitee to enforce a right to an advancement of expenses) it shall be a defense that, and (ii) in any suit by the Corporation to recover an advancement of expenses pursuant to the terms of an undertaking the Corporation shall be entitled to recover such expenses upon a final adjudication that, the indemnitee has not met any applicable standard for indemnification set forth in the Delaware General Corporation Law. Neither the failure of the Corporation (including its Board of Directors, independent legal counsel, or its stockholders) to have made a determination prior to the commencement of such suit that indemnification of the indemnitee is proper in the circumstances because the indemnitee has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in the Delaware General Corporation Law, nor an actual determination by the Corporation (including its Board of Directors, independent legal counsel, or its stockholders) that the indemnitee has not met such applicable standard of conduct, shall create a presumption that the indemnitee has not met the applicable standard of conduct or, in the case of such a suit brought by the indemnitee, be a defense to such suit. In any suit brought by the indemnitee to enforce a right to indemnification or to an advancement of expenses hereunder, or by the Corporation to recover an advancement of expenses pursuant to the terms of an undertaking, the burden of proving that the indemnitee is not entitled to be indemnified, or to such advancement of expenses, under this Article TENTH or otherwise shall be on the Corporation.

D. The rights to indemnification and to the advancement of expenses conferred in this Article TENTH shall not be exclusive of any other right which any person may have or hereafter acquire under any statute, the Corporation's Certificate of Incorporation, Bylaws, agreement, vote of stockholders or Disinterested Directors or otherwise.

E. The Corporation may maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any Director, Officer, employee or agent of the Corporation or subsidiary or Affiliate or another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any expense, liability or loss, whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify such person against such expense, liability or loss under the Delaware General Corporation Law.

F. The Corporation may, to the extent authorized from time to time by the Board of Directors, grant rights to indemnification and to the advancement of expenses to any employee or agent of the Corporation to the fullest extent of the provisions of this Article TENTH with respect to the indemnification and advancement of expenses of Directors and Officers of the Corporation.

**ELEVENTH:**

A Director of this Corporation shall not be personally liable to the Corporation or its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a Director, except for liability: (i) for any breach of the Director's duty of loyalty to the Corporation or its stockholders; (ii) for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law; (iii) under Section 174 of the Delaware General Corporation Law; or (iv) for any transaction from which the Director derived an improper personal benefit. If the Delaware General Corporation Law is amended to authorize corporate action further eliminating or limiting the personal liability of Directors, then the liability of a Director of the Corporation shall be eliminated or limited to the fullest extent permitted by the Delaware General Corporation Law, as so amended.

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Any repeal or modification of the foregoing paragraph by the stockholders of the Corporation shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a Director of the Corporation existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

With respect to possible indemnification of directors, officers and controlling persons of Berkshire Hills Bancorp for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 (the "Act") pursuant to such provisions, Berkshire Hills Bancorp is aware that the Securities and Exchange Commission has publicly taken the position that such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Act and is, therefore, unenforceable.

### **Item 16. Exhibits**

- |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Form of Underwriting Agreement for any offering of securities (The form of such agreement for securities offered will be filed as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.)                 |
| 4(a)  | Form of Indenture for Senior Debt Securities.*                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 4(b)  | Form of Note for Senior Debt Securities.**                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4(c)  | Form of Indenture for Subordinated Debt Securities.*                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 4(d)  | Form of Note for Subordinated Debt Securities.**                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4(e)  | Certificate of Incorporation of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. (incorporated by reference to the Exhibits contained in the Registration Statement on Form S-1, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 10, 2000). |
| 4(f)  | Specimen Common Stock Certificate (incorporated by reference to the Exhibits contained in the Registration Statement on Form S-1, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 10, 2000).                             |
| 4(g)  | Form of Certificate of Designation for series of Preferred Stock.**                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4(h)  | Form of Preferred Stock Certificate.**                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 5     | Opinion of Muldoon Murphy & Aguggia LLP, as to legality of debt securities, common stock and preferred stock.*                                                                                                                      |
| 12    | Computation of Consolidated Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges.*                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 23(a) | Consent of Wolf & Company, P.C.*                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 23(b) | Consent of Muldoon Murphy & Aguggia LLP (included in Exhibit 5).*                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 24    | Power of Attorney of certain officers and directors of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. (included on the signature pages herewith).*                                                                                                   |
| 25(a) | Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of Wilmington Trust Company, as Trustee under the Indenture for Senior Debt Securities.*                                                       |
| 25(b) | Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of Wilmington Trust Company, as Trustee under the Indenture for Subordinated Debt Securities.*                                                 |

\* filed herewith

\*\* (to be subsequently filed by an amendment to the Registration Statement or by a Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.)

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### **Item 17. Undertakings**

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) to 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 estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20 percent change in the 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 the undertakings set forth in paragraphs (1)(i), (1)(ii) and (1)(iii) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or 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;

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered 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 of 1933 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), (vii), or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by section 10(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 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.

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(5) That, for the purpose of determining any liability of the Registrant under the Securities Act to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities:

The Registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the 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 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 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 Registrant or used or referred to by the Registrant;

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

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

(6) That, for the purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of our annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or 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 therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof;

(7) That:

(i) For purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, 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 shall be deemed to be part of this registration statement as of the time it was declared effective.

(ii) For the purposes of determining of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each post-effective amendment that contains a form of prospectus 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.

(8) To file an application for the purpose of determining the eligibility of the trustee to act under subsection (a) of Section 310 of the Trust Indenture Act in accordance with the rules and regulations prescribed by the Commission under Section 305(b)(2) of the Trust Indenture Act.

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 Securities and Exchange 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.

Table of Contents**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe it meets all the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the City of Pittsfield, Commonwealth of Massachusetts on September 11, 2006.

**BERKSHIRE HILLS BANCORP, INC.**

By: /s/ MICHAEL P. DALY

*President and Chief Executive Officer*

Each person whose signature appears below hereby constitutes and appoints Michael P. Daly, Wayne F. Patenaude and Gerald A. Denmark, Esq., or any of them, acting alone, as his or her true and lawful attorney-in-fact, with full power and authority to execute in the name, place and stead of each such person in any and all capacities and to file, an amendment or amendments to the Registration Statement (and all exhibits thereto) and any documents relating thereto, which amendments may make such changes in the Registration Statement as said officer or officers so acting deem(s) advisable.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities indicated on September 11, 2006.

| <u>Signature</u>               | <u>Title</u>                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>/s/ MICHAEL P. DALY</u>     | Director, President and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer) |
| <b>Michael P. Daly</b>         |                                                                               |
| <u>/s/ WAYNE F. PATENAUDE</u>  | Senior Vice President, Treasurer                                              |
| <b>Wayne F. Patenaude</b>      | and Chief Financial Officer                                                   |
|                                | (Principal Financial and Accounting Officer)                                  |
| <u>/s/ LAWRENCE A. BOSSIDY</u> | Non-Executive Chairman                                                        |
| <b>Lawrence A. Bossidy</b>     |                                                                               |
| <u>/s/ WALLACE W. ALTES</u>    | Director                                                                      |
| <b>Wallace W. Altes</b>        |                                                                               |
| <b>John B. Davies</b>          | Director                                                                      |
| <u>/s/ DAVID B. FARRELL</u>    | Director                                                                      |

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**David B. Farrell**

/s/ CORNELIUS D. MAHONEY

Director

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**Cornelius D. Mahoney**

/s/ EDWARD G. MCCORMICK, ESQ.

Director

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**Edward G. McCormick, Esq.**

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Director

**Catherine B. Miller**

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| <b><u>Signature</u></b>     | <b><u>Title</u></b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| /s/ D. JEFFREY TEMPLETON    | Director            |
| <b>D. Jeffrey Templeton</b> |                     |
| /s/ CORYDON L. THURSTON     | Director            |
| <b>Corydon L. Thurston</b>  |                     |
| /s/ ANN H. TRABULSI         | Director            |
| <b>Ann H. Trabulsi</b>      |                     |
| /s/ ROBERT A. WELLS         | Director            |
| <b>Robert A. Wells</b>      |                     |

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**INDEX TO EXHIBITS**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| 23(a) | Consent of Wolf & Company, P.C.*                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 23(b) | Consent of Muldoon Murphy & Aguggia LLP (included in Exhibit 5).*                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 24    | Power of Attorney of certain officers and directors of Berkshire Hills Bancorp, Inc. (included on the signature pages herewith).*                                                                                                   |
| 25(a) | Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of Wilmington Trust Company, as Trustee under the Indenture for Senior Debt Securities.*                                                       |
| 25(b) | Form T-1 Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of Wilmington Trust Company, as Trustee under the Indenture for Subordinated Debt Securities.*                                                 |

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\* filed herewith

\*\* (to be subsequently filed by an amendment to the Registration Statement or by a Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.)