

CENTRAL GARDEN & PET CO
Form 424B5
August 06, 2018
Table of Contents

**Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)
Registration No. 333-221935**

This preliminary prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus relate to an effective registration statement under the Securities Act of 1933. The information in this preliminary prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities and are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Subject to Completion

Preliminary Prospectus Supplement dated August 6, 2018

PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

(to prospectus dated December 7, 2017)

\$200,000,000

Class A common stock

We are offering up to _____ shares of our Class A common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Holders of our Class A common stock have no voting rights, except as required by Delaware law. Only the holders of our common stock and Class B common stock vote for the election of directors and on most other matters.

Our Class A common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CENTA. On August 3, 2018, the last reported sale price of our Class A common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market was \$40.28 per share.

Investing in our Class A common stock involves risks. See Risk Factors beginning on page S-11 of this prospectus supplement, on page 2 of the accompanying prospectus and in the documents incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement before investing in our Class A common

stock.

	Per Share	Total
Public offering price	\$	\$
Underwriting discounts and commissions	\$	\$
Proceeds, before expenses, to us	\$	\$

The underwriters may also exercise their option to purchase up to an additional _____ shares from us, at the public offering price, less the underwriting discounts and commissions, for 30 days after the date of this prospectus supplement.

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

The shares will be ready for delivery on or about _____, 2018.

Joint Book-Running Managers

BofA Merrill Lynch

J.P. Morgan

BMO Capital Markets

SunTrust Robinson Humphrey

Co-Managers

Barclays

KeyBanc Capital Markets

The date of this prospectus supplement is _____, 2018.

Table of Contents**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
Prospectus Supplement	
<u>About this Prospectus Supplement</u>	S-ii
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	S-ii
<u>Market, Ranking and Other Data</u>	S-iv
<u>Trademarks, Service Marks and Trade Names</u>	S-iv
<u>Prospectus Summary</u>	S-1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	S-11
<u>Price Range of Our Common Stock and Class A Common Stock</u>	S-15
<u>Dividend Policy</u>	S-16
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	S-17
<u>Capitalization</u>	S-18
<u>Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations</u>	S-19
<u>Certain ERISA Considerations</u>	S-23
<u>Underwriting</u>	S-25
<u>Legal Matters</u>	S-33
<u>Experts</u>	S-33
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	S-33
<u>Certain Documents Incorporated by Reference</u>	S-34
Prospectus	
<u>Central Garden & Pet Company</u>	1
<u>About This Prospectus</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	2
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	2
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	4
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	4
<u>Description of Securities</u>	5
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	5
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	20
<u>Description of the Warrants</u>	23
<u>Selling Securityholders</u>	24
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	25
<u>Validity of the Securities</u>	27
<u>Experts</u>	27
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	27
<u>Certain Documents Incorporated by Reference</u>	27

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This document is in two parts. The first part is the prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of the notes we are offering and certain other matters relating to us and our financial condition. The second part, the accompanying prospectus, gives more general information about securities we may offer from time to time, some of which may not apply to the notes we are offering hereby. You should read this prospectus supplement along with the accompanying prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein, as well as any free writing prospectus that is filed, including the term sheet for the notes we are offering. If the description of the offering varies between this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement. Generally, when we refer to this prospectus, we are referring to the prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus combined together with all documents incorporated by reference.

You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and any related free writing prospectus. Neither we nor the underwriters have authorized anyone to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. Neither we nor the underwriters are making an offer to sell the notes in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

You should not assume that the information contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, and any related free writing prospectus, or any other offering materials is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of each document, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, any related free writing prospectus or any sale of the notes. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those respective dates.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, include forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements include statements concerning our plans, objectives, goals, strategies, future events, future revenues or performance, projected cost savings, capital expenditures, financing needs, plans or intentions relating to acquisitions, our competitive strengths and weaknesses, our business strategy and the trends we anticipate in the industries and markets in which we operate and other information that is not historical information. When used in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, the words estimates, expects, anticipates, projects, plans, intends, believes and variations of such words or similar expressions are to identify forward-looking statements. All forward-looking statements, including, without limitation, our examination of historical operating trends, are based upon our current expectations and various assumptions. Our expectations, beliefs and projections are expressed in good faith, and we believe there is a reasonable basis for them, but we cannot assure you that our expectations, beliefs and projections will be realized.

There are a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause our actual results to differ materially from the forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference. Important factors that could cause our actual results to differ materially from the forward-looking statements we make in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, are set forth in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, including the factors described in the section entitled Risk Factors herein and in the documents incorporated by reference. If any of these risks or uncertainties materializes, or if any of our underlying assumptions are incorrect, our actual results may differ significantly from the results that we express in, or imply by,

any of our forward-looking statements. We do not undertake any obligation to revise these forward-looking statements to reflect future events or circumstances,

S-ii

Table of Contents

except as required by law. Some of the factors that may cause our actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by forward-looking statements, or from historical results, include, but are not limited to, the following factors:

seasonality and fluctuations in our operating results and cash flow;

fluctuations in market prices for seeds and grains and other raw materials;

our inability to pass through cost increases in a timely manner;

our dependence upon key executives;

risks associated with new product introductions, including the risk that our new products will not produce sufficient sales to recoup our investment;

fluctuations in energy prices, fuel and related petrochemical costs;

declines in consumer spending during economic downturns;

inflation, deflation and other adverse macro-economic conditions;

supply shortages in pet birds, small animals and fish;

adverse weather conditions;

risks associated with our acquisition strategy;

access to and cost of additional capital;

dependence on a small number of customers for a significant portion of our business;

consolidation trends in the retail industry;

competition in our industries;

potential goodwill or intangible asset impairment;

continuing implementation of an enterprise resource planning information technology system;

our inability to protect our trademarks and other proprietary rights;

potential environmental liabilities;

risk associated with international sourcing;

litigation and product liability claims;

regulatory issues;

the impact of product recalls;

potential costs and risks associated with actual or potential cyber attacks;

the impact of the U.S. Tax Cuts and Jobs Act;

the voting power associated with our Class B stock;

potential dilution from issuance of authorized shares; and

the imposition of tariffs and potential global trade wars.

S-iii

Table of Contents

Readers should carefully review the reports and documents we file from time to time with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC). For information about how to obtain a copy of these reports or other documents that we file with the SEC, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

MARKET, RANKING AND OTHER DATA

The data included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, regarding markets and ranking, including the size of certain markets and our position and the position of our competitors and products within these markets, are based on both independent industry publications, including The Freedonia Group U.S. Lawn & Garden Consumables Custom Update (2017); The Freedonia Group Landscaping Products in the U.S., 5th Edition (2017); 2017 National Gardening Survey; Packaged Facts U.S. Pet Market Outlook, 2017-2018 May 2017; Packaged Facts Pet Treats and Chews in the U.S., 2nd Edition August 2017; Packaged Facts Durable Dog and Cat Petcare Products in the U.S. December 2016; Packaged Facts Pet Litter, Clean Up, and Odor Products: U.S. Market Trends May 2016; Packaged Facts Pet Medications in the U.S., 5th Edition August 2017; American Pet Products Association (APPA) National Pet Owners Survey 2017-2018; U.S. Census Bureau, and our estimates based on management's knowledge and experience in the markets in which we operate. Our estimates have been based on information provided by customers, suppliers, trade and business organizations and other contacts in the markets in which we operate. While we are not aware of any misstatements regarding our market and ranking data presented herein, our estimates involve risks and uncertainties and are subject to change based on various factors, including those discussed under the heading [Risk Factors](#) in this prospectus supplement. This information may prove to be inaccurate because of the method by which we obtained some of the data for our estimates or because this information cannot always be verified with complete certainty due to the limits on the availability and reliability of raw data, the voluntary nature of the data gathering process and other limitations and uncertainties inherent in a survey of market size. As a result, you should be aware that market, ranking and other similar data included in this prospectus supplement or incorporated by reference herein, and estimates and beliefs based on that data, may not be reliable. Neither we nor the underwriters can guarantee the accuracy or completeness of such information contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

TRADEMARKS, SERVICE MARKS AND TRADE NAMES

We own or have rights to use trademarks, service marks and trade names in connection with the operation of our business. In addition, our names, logos and website names and addresses are or include our service marks or trademarks. Other trademarks, service marks and trade names appearing in this prospectus supplement are the property of their respective owners. Solely for convenience, some of the trademarks, service marks, and trade names referred to in this prospectus supplement may be listed without the ® or ™ symbols, but the absence of such symbols does not indicate the registration state whether or not they are registered. We will assert, to the fullest extent under applicable law, our rights or the rights of the applicable licensors to these trademarks, service marks and trade names.

Table of Contents**PROSPECTUS SUMMARY**

This summary highlights the information contained elsewhere in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Because this is only a summary, it does not contain all of the information that may be important to you. For a more complete understanding of this offering, we encourage you to read this entire prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and documents to which we refer you. Except as otherwise required by the context or as to otherwise noted, as used in this prospectus supplement, references to Central, the Company, we, us, our and similar phrases are to Central Garden & Pet Company and its consolidated subsidiaries.

Our fiscal year ends on the last Saturday of September, and our fiscal quarters end on the last Saturday of December, March and June. Fiscal year 2017 included 53 weeks; fiscal years 2015-2016 included 52 weeks.

Our Company

Central is a leading innovator, producer and distributor of branded and private label products for the lawn & garden and pet supplies markets in the United States. The total pet food, treats and supplies industry in 2016 was estimated by Packaged Facts and the pet industry to have been approximately \$55.9 billion in annual retail sales. We estimate the annual retail sales of the pet supplies, live animal, and consumables and natural pet food markets in the categories in which we participate to be approximately \$28.0 billion. The total lawn and garden consumables and decorative products industry in the United States is estimated to be approximately \$27.6 billion in annual retail sales, including fertilizer, pesticides, growing media, seeds, mulch, other consumables and decorative products. We estimate the annual retail sales of the lawn and garden consumables and decorative products markets in the categories in which we participate to be approximately \$18.9 billion.

Our pet supplies products include products for dogs and cats, including edible bones, premium healthy edible and non-edible chews, super premium dog and cat food and treats, toys, pet carriers, grooming supplies and other accessories; products for birds, small animals and specialty pets, including food, cages and habitats, toys, chews and related accessories; animal and household health and insect control products; live fish and products for fish, reptiles and other aquarium-based pets, including aquariums, furniture and lighting fixtures, pumps, filters, water conditioners, food and supplements, and information and knowledge resources; and products for horses and livestock. These products are sold under the brands including Adams[®], Aqueo[®], Avoderm[®], Bio Spot Active Care[®], Cade[®], Farnam[®], Four Paws[®], Kaytee[®], K&H Pet Products[®], Nylabone[®], Pinnacle[®], TFH[®], Zilla[®] as well as a number of other brands including Altosid[®], Comfort Zone[®], Coralife[®], Interpet[®], Kent Marine[®], Pet Select[®], Super Pet[®] and Zodiac[®].

Our lawn and garden supplies products include proprietary and non-proprietary grass seed; wild bird feed, bird feeders, bird houses and other birding accessories; weed, grass, and other herbicides, insecticide and pesticide products; fertilizers; and decorative outdoor lifestyle products including pottery, trellises and other wood products. These products are sold under the brands AMDRO[®], Ironite[®], Pennington[®], and Sevin[®], as well as a number of other brand names including Lilly Miller[®], Over-N-Out[®], Smart Seed[®] and The Rebels[®].

Industry***The Pet Industry***

The pet industry includes food, supplies, veterinarian care, services and live animals. We operate primarily in the pet supplies segment of the industry. This segment includes: products for dogs and cats, products for birds, small animals and specialty pets, including cages and habitats, toys, chews, and related accessories; animal and household health and

insect control products; products for fish, reptiles and other aquarium-based

S-1

Table of Contents

pets, including aquariums, furniture and lighting fixtures, pumps, filters, water conditioners and supplements, and information and knowledge resources; and products for horses and livestock. Packaged Facts estimates the pet supplies segment was \$16.5 billion in revenue in 2016. We also operate in the natural category of dog and cat food and treats and chews and in the live animal category.

We believe the U.S. pet supplies market will grow over the long-term due to favorable demographic and leisure trends. The key demographics bolstering our markets are the growth rates in the number of millennials who now account for 35% of pet owners and account for more than half of small animal, reptile and saltwater fish owners. According to the 2017 2018 APPA National Pet Owners Survey, the number of U.S. pet owners in recent years has reached record highs, with 84.6 million households, or 68%, owning a pet, an increase of almost five million households in two years. In addition, many pet supplies products (e.g., dog and cat food, dog chews, bird food, grooming supplies, pest control, etc.) are routinely consumed and replenished. For example, as many as 82% of dog owners and 65% of cat owners regularly purchase some type of treat.

The U.S. pet supplies market is highly fragmented with approximately 1,400 manufacturers, consisting primarily of small companies with limited product lines. The majority of these manufacturers do not have a captive sales and logistics network and must rely on us or other independent distributors to supply their products to regional pet specialty chains and independent retailers. According to Packaged Facts, pet supplies sales increased 24% from 2012 to 2016. Sales are expected to increase an additional 19% to \$19.6 billion by 2021, indicating the strength of this category.

The pet food and supplies industry retail channel also remains fragmented, with approximately 7,800 independent pet supply stores in the United States and only two national specialty retailers, PetSmart and PETCO. According to Packaged Facts, these two pet superstores have declined from 24% in 2014 and 2015 to 23% of overall pet product sales in 2016, and are expected to decline to 21% by 2017. Pet products have also become a growing category in mass merchandisers, discounters, grocery outlets and the e-commerce channel. Mass merchandisers, supermarkets and discounters have historically carried a limited product assortment that features primarily pet food, but we believe these retailers are devoting more shelf space to meet increased consumer demand for premium pet supplies. Independent pet stores typically have a relatively broad product selection and attempt to differentiate themselves by offering premier brands and knowledgeable service.

The Garden Industry

We believe that gardening is one of the most popular leisure activities in the United States. According to the National Gardening Survey, 74% of U.S. households participate in lawn and garden activities. Participation is highest amongst married households, people aged 55 and older, and those with no children. This demographic is expected to increase from 89 million in 2015 to 99 million in 2020. As the baby boom generation ages, this segment is expected to grow faster than the total population. We believe that this demographic will result in an increase in the number of lawn and garden product users. With more people gardening in their yards and the potential trends of food gardening and organic gardening, we perceive this market as staying intact and showing positive growth. The Garden industry may be adversely impacted by fluctuations in input costs and weather. We estimate the retail sales of the lawn and garden supplies industry in the categories in which we participate to be approximately \$18.9 billion in 2016.

Lawn and garden products are sold to consumers through a number of distribution channels, including home centers, mass merchants, independent nurseries and hardware stores. Home and garden centers and mass merchants typically carry multiple premium and value brands.

Table of Contents

Competitive Strengths

We believe we have a number of competitive strengths, which serve as the foundation of our business strategy, including the following:

Market Leadership Positions Built on a Strong Brand Portfolio. We are one of the leaders in the U.S. pet supplies market and in the U.S. consumer lawn and garden supplies market. We have a diversified portfolio of brands, many of which we believe are among the leading brands in their respective U.S. market categories. The majority of our brands have been marketed and sold for more than 25 years.

History of Innovative New Products and Customer Service. We continuously seek to introduce new products, both as complementary extensions of existing product lines and in new product categories. Over the last three years, we have received a number of awards for innovation, customer service and marketing.

For innovation in 2017, Central won WalMart's Innovation Award for a private label program. Also in 2017, the Pet segment's Kaytee brand won awards at Global Pet for the LED Run-About Ball, the CritterHome Habitat and the CritterTrail Display; the CritterTrail LED Habitat won the Pet Business Industry Recognition Award; Zilla's Front Opening Terrarium won a Global Pet Award while its Floating Basking Platforms won the Pet Business Editor's Choice and Aqueon won the Pet Product News Editor's Choice Award for QuietFlow LED Pro Filters and Pro Sol Light Fixtures as well as the Pet Retail Brands' Best New Product Award for the Aqueon Betta Puzzle modular enclosure. In 2016, the Pet segment received awards at both Global Pet Expo and Super Zoo in the reptile category for Zilla Turtle Trunk and in the aquatics category for Aqueon NeoGlow aquariums. Aqueon's OptiBright won Pet Product News Editor's Choice award and both Aqueon Jukebox 5 aquarium kit and Herptile Habitat Accessories for Zilla Turtle Trunk won the Pet Business Industry Recognition Award. Also in 2016, we won Best in Show at Global Pet for the small animal category for Kaytee Critter Trail LED. In 2015, we received best new aquatic product at Global Pet Expo 2015 for the Aqueon Jukebox.

For customer service in 2017, the Garden segment won several awards from our largest customers including one of Lowe's three highest awards as Seasonal Vendor of the Year; Supplier of the Year in Lawn & Garden at Lowe's in both 2016 and 2017 and WalMart in 2017 as well as WalMart's H3 (Humble, Hustle & Hungry) Award. In 2017, the Pet segment won the Pet Retail Brands Specialty Pet Vendor Partner of the Year Award for efforts in building strategic relationships and offering the highest level of support and collaboration. Also in 2016, at the WalMart Lawn & Garden Supplier Summit, Central was recognized for both e-commerce and collaboration.

For Marketing in 2017, Central won Summit Creative Awards for its S.L.A.P. Public Service Campaign for Mosquito Awareness and its Bug Free Grains Ad Campaign in the B2B category as well as numerous American Horse Publications Awards for print, e-newsletter, website and brand multi-media ad campaigns.

Strong Relationships with Retailers. We have developed strong relationships with major and independent retailers, as well as e-commerce retailers, through product innovation, premium brands, broad product offerings, private label programs, proprietary sales and logistics capabilities and a high level of customer service. Major retailers value the efficiency of dealing with suppliers with national scope and strong brands. We believe our ability to meet their unique needs for packaging and point of sale displays

provides us with a competitive advantage. Independent retailers value our high level of customer service and broad array of premium branded products. We

S-3

Table of Contents

believe these strengths have assisted us in becoming one of the largest pet supplies vendors to PetSmart, PETCO and WalMart and among the largest lawn and garden supplies vendors to Wal*Mart, Home Depot and Lowe's, as well as a leading supplier to independent pet and garden supplies retailers in the United States.

Sales and Logistics Networks. We are a leading supplier to independent specialty retailers for the pet and lawn and garden supplies markets through our sales and logistics networks. We believe our sales and logistics networks give us a significant competitive advantage over other suppliers. These networks provide us with key access to independent pet specialty retail stores and retail lawn and garden customers that require two-step distribution for our branded products facilitating:

acquisition and maintenance of premium shelf placement;

prompt product replenishment;

customization of retailer programs;

quick responses to changing customer and retailer preferences;

rapid deployment and feedback for new products; and

immediate exposure for new internally developed and acquired brands.

We plan to continue to utilize our team of dedicated sales people and our sales and logistics networks to expand sales of our branded products.

Disciplined and Proven M&A Strategy. Our M&A model is one of our key strengths. Since 1992, we have completed over 50 acquisitions to create a company that generated approximately \$2.1 billion of net sales in fiscal year 2017. We are patient and disciplined value buyers, typically focused on closing manageable-sized opportunities in the garden and pet areas, which can leverage our capabilities and where we can add value through our low-cost manufacturing capabilities, operating synergies, or strong distribution network. We generally prefer to acquire businesses with proven, seasoned management teams, which are committed to stay with the acquired businesses after closing.

Business Strategy

Our objective is to grow revenues, profits, and cash flow by enhancing our position as one of the leading companies in the U.S. pet supplies and lawn and garden supplies industries. We seek to do so by developing new products, increasing market share, and working in partnership with our customers to grow the categories in which we participate. To achieve our objective, we plan to capitalize on our strengths and favorable industry trends by executing on the following five key strategic pillars to drive our growth:

Accelerate the growth momentum of our portfolio.

We are managing each business differentially, based on its role and its strategy within our business portfolio. We have assessed the profitability and profit growth potential of each of our businesses. All businesses will have a clear role in the portfolio and a strategy that is consistent with that role. Some of our businesses are managed to optimize topline growth, whereas others should be more focused on reducing costs and maximizing operating income. For example, businesses that have higher margins, higher profit potential and higher growth potential are strategic growth engines for us. We have aligned our resources and initiatives with these roles for each business.

S-4

Table of Contents

We are seeking to acquire businesses that are accretive to our growth. We believe that there are a number of potential acquisition opportunities that exist across our Pet and Garden business segments. The Pet industry is highly fragmented, composed of smaller companies with limited product lines and captive sales and logistics networks. While the overall Garden industry is more consolidated, niche, on-trend categories within Garden, such as indoor gardening, soil-free, organic fertilizers and live plants, remain fragmented. We also believe that we are a preferred acquirer for companies in the Pet and Garden industries due to our M&A track record, large distribution footprint, and balanced approach to integration of acquired businesses.

We will exit businesses where we cannot find a path to profitability and have exited two businesses in the past two years. We continually review our businesses to ensure they can meet our expectations and in some cases have implemented strategies to reverse sub-par performance.

Build on strong customer relationships.

Strong customer relationships have been a key pillar of our company. Our Customer-First mindset entails listening to our customers and being flexible, fast and principled. Partnering with our customers is a key initiative in our efforts to grow both our customers and our revenues and profits. A unique aspect of our business model which is of significant value to many of our customers is that in addition to our branded manufactured products, we also produce private label products and distribute products produced by third-party manufacturers. This enables us to provide a wide variety of products across multiple categories for our customers. We are also expanding our category management capabilities to provide direction fueled by consumer insights and specific customer understanding to grow our retail partners category sales and profits. We are expanding this capability across the Company to make recommendations around merchandising, assortment, pricing and shelving to grow our customers categories.

Increase innovation output and success rates.

We are seeking to develop more differentiated and more defensible new products; and increasing our overall investment in innovation, consumer insights, and demand creation to an appropriate level for each business. We emphasize having a three-year line-of-sight on our initiatives, enabling us to best fund and allocate our resources to make sure we have the ability to deliver on our innovation goals.

We continuously strive to get a deeper understanding of our consumers, comprehending what products and features they desire and how they make their purchasing decisions. We are making incremental investments in people and dollars to accomplish this goal. Additionally, we are increasing our digital capabilities to better reach consumers making sure we are listening in the right places on the internet and enhancing our search engine optimization and digital marketing communication.

Drive cost savings and productivity improvements to fuel growth.

We believe we have the opportunity to reduce our cost of goods sold and administrative spending by 1% to 2% per year, despite slightly higher costs and administrative spending in recent periods. We expect these cost savings to fund growth levers on our business which provides us the opportunity to invest more in our business.

S-5

Table of Contents

We have begun optimizing our supply-chain footprint, improving our operating efficiency with a continuous improvement mindset, and improving coordination by sharing best practices and aligning for scale. While we value being a decentralized company, we believe we have significant opportunities to improve our performance by driving the processes and programs to allow us to align for scale and to facilitate activities to share knowledge and resources.

Attract, retain and develop exceptional employees.

We have nearly 5,000 employees in approximately 80 locations. People work at Central because they love the categories in which we operate and that creates a passionate and effective group. We also have a strong leadership team representing a mix of successful entrepreneurs and classically trained CPG executives that have delivered favorable growth over the last few years. We place an emphasis on helping our employees develop their skills and focus on succession planning to ensure we can grow sustainably year-after-year.

Corporate Information

We were incorporated in Delaware in May 1992 as the successor to a California corporation that was formed in 1955. Our executive offices are located at 1340 Treat Boulevard, Suite 600, Walnut Creek, California 94597, and our telephone number is (925) 948-4000. Our website is www.central.com. The information on, or accessible through, our website is not incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

The Offering

Issuer	Central Garden & Pet Company
Class A common stock offered by us	shares (or shares if the underwriters exercise their option to purchase additional shares in full)
Common stock outstanding after this offering:	
Class A common stock	shares (or shares if the underwriters exercise their option to purchase additional shares in full)
Common stock	shares
Class B common stock	shares
Use of Proceeds	We expect the net proceeds from this offering will be approximately \$ million (or \$ million if the underwriters exercise their option to purchase additional shares in full) after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us. We expect to use the net proceeds from this offering for general corporate purposes, including funding potential acquisitions. Currently, we have no acquisitions pending. We will invest the net proceeds of this offering in short-term government securities, money market funds, or other investment vehicles permitted under our investment policy until suitable acquisitions are identified or funds are invested in our business. See Use of Proceeds.
Dividend Policy	We have not paid any cash dividends on our common stock or our Class A common stock, and we do not expect to declare or pay any dividends in the foreseeable future. See Dividend Policy.
Risk Factors	An investment in our Class A common stock involves risks. Please read the section titled Risk Factors beginning on page S-11 of this prospectus supplement, on page 2 of the accompanying prospectus and in the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement.
NASDAQ Global Select Market symbols:	

Class A common stock

CENTA

Common stock

CENT

The number of shares estimated to be outstanding after this offering is based on the number of our shares outstanding on June 30, 2018, and excludes 2,381,600 shares of Class A common stock issuable upon exercise of stock options outstanding under our stock option plan on June 30, 2018, of which options for 626,202 shares of Class A common stock were exercisable on that date.

S-7

Table of Contents

Holders of our Class A common stock have no voting rights, except as required by Delaware law. Only the holders of our common stock and Class B common stock, neither of which we are offering by this prospectus supplement, vote for the election of directors and on most other matters. The holders of common stock are entitled to one vote per share, and the holders of Class B common stock are entitled to the lesser of ten votes per share or 49% of the total votes cast. See Description of Capital Stock in the accompanying prospectus.

Except as otherwise indicated, all information in this prospectus supplement assumes no exercise of the underwriters option to purchase up to an additional shares from us.

Table of Contents**SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

The following table contains summary historical financial information derived from our audited consolidated financial statements as of and for the fiscal years ended September 24, 2016 and September 30, 2017, and for the fiscal year ended September 26, 2015, each of which is incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement from our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2017, and as of the fiscal year ended September 26, 2015. The summary historical financial information derived from our audited consolidated financial statements as of September 26, 2015 is not included or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement. In addition, the following table contains summary historical financial information derived from our unaudited consolidated financial statements for the quarters ended June 24, 2017 and June 30, 2018 and as of June 30, 2018, each of which is incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement from our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2018. The summary historical financial information is not necessary indicative of the results of future operations and should be read in accordance with Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations and our consolidated financial statements and related notes incorporated by reference into this prospectus summary.

(in thousands, except per share amounts)	Fiscal Year Ended			Nine Months Ended	
	September 26, 2015	September 24, 2016	September 30, 2017	June 24, 2017	June 30, 2018
Statement of Operations Data:					
Net sales	\$ 1,650,737	\$ 1,829,017	\$ 2,054,478	\$ 1,564,014	\$ 1,713,048
Cost of goods sold and occupancy	1,162,685	1,275,967	1,421,670	1,076,534	1,184,690
Gross profit	488,052	553,050	632,808	487,480	528,358
Selling, general and administrative expenses	389,345	421,864	476,696	345,749	379,232
Intangible asset and goodwill impairments (1)	7,272	1,828			
Income from operations	91,435	129,358	156,112	141,731	149,126
Interest expense, net	(39,898)	(42,707)	(28,062)	(20,877)	(27,113)
Other income (expense)	13	(17,013)	(1,621)	(306)	542
Income before income taxes and noncontrolling interest	51,550	69,638	126,429	120,548	122,555
Income tax expense	18,535	24,053	46,699	44,621	8,802
Income including noncontrolling interest	33,015	45,585	79,730	75,927	113,753
Net income attributable to noncontrolling interest	1,044	1,071	902	1,358	727
Net income attributable to Central Garden & Pet	\$ 31,971	\$ 44,514	\$ 78,828	\$ 74,569	\$ 113,026
Net income per share attributable to Central Garden & Pet:					
Basic	\$ 0.66	\$ 0.91	\$ 1.57	\$ 1.49	\$ 2.22

Diluted	\$	0.64	\$	0.87	\$	1.52	\$	1.44	\$	2.15
---------	----	------	----	------	----	------	----	------	----	------

S-9

Table of Contents

(in thousands, except per share amounts)	Fiscal Year Ended			Nine Months Ended	
	September 26, 2015	September 24, 2016	September 30, 2017	June 24, 2017	June 30, 2018
Weighted average shares used in the computation of net income per share:					
Basic	48,562	48,964	50,230	50,084	50,938
Diluted	49,638	51,075	51,820	51,769	52,670
Cash Flow Data:					
Cash provided by operating activities	\$ 87,449	\$ 151,426	\$ 114,309	\$ 42,648	\$ 17,762
Cash used in investing activities	\$ (49,854)	\$ (91,195)	\$ (164,577)	\$ (149,926)	\$ (125,816)
Cash (used) provided by financing activities	\$ (68,370)	\$ (14,165)	\$ (10,392)	\$ 28,854	\$ 280,092
Other Data:					
Depreciation and amortization	\$ 33,703	\$ 40,001	\$ 42,719	\$ 31,374	\$ 34,872
Capital expenditures	\$ 22,030	\$ 27,622	\$ 44,659	\$ 37,087	\$ 27,003

	September 30, 2017	June 30, 2018
	(in thousands)	
Balance Sheet Data:		
Cash and cash equivalents (2)	\$ 32,397	\$ 204,388
Working capital	\$ 462,849	\$ 790,744
Total assets	\$ 1,306,906	\$ 1,708,405
Total debt (3)	\$ 395,653	\$ 691,860
Stockholders' equity	\$ 637,142	\$ 744,721

- (1) During the fourth quarter of fiscal 2016 and fiscal 2015, we recognized non-cash impairment charges in our Pet Segment of \$1.8 million and \$7.3 million, respectively, related to the impairment of indefinite-lived intangible assets caused by increased competition and declining volume of sales.
- (2) Excludes \$14.0 million of restricted cash used as collateral for understanding letters of credit at June 30, 2018.
- (3) Includes current portion of long-term debt.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our Class A common stock involves risk. These risks are described below and under Risk Factors in Item 1A in Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2017 and in Item 1A in Part II of our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the three and six months ended June 30, 2018, both of which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. See Where You Can Find More Information in this prospectus supplement. Before making a decision to invest in our Class A common stock, you should carefully consider these risks as well as other information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. The risks and uncertainties we have described are not the only ones we face. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently, deem immaterial may also affect our operations. If any of these risks actually occur, our business, results of operations and financial condition could suffer, and you could lose your investment in us.

Risks Related to our Class A Common Stock and this Offering

We do not presently expect to pay dividends in the foreseeable future.

We have never paid any cash dividends on our common stock or Class A common stock and currently do not intend to do so. Provisions of our credit facility and the indenture governing our senior notes restrict our ability to pay cash dividends. Any future determination to pay cash dividends will be at the discretion of our board of directors, subject to limitations under applicable law and contractual restrictions, and will depend upon our results of operations, financial condition and other factors deemed relevant by our board of directors. See Dividend Policy.

Our Founder, through his holdings of our Class B common stock, exercises effective control of the Company, which may discourage potential acquisitions of our business and could have an adverse effect on the market price of our stock.

Holders of our Class B common stock are entitled to the lesser of ten votes per share or 49% of the total votes cast, and each share of Class B common stock is convertible at any time into one share of our common stock. Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share owned. Holders of our Class A common stock have no voting rights, except as required by Delaware law.

As of July 31, 2018, William E. Brown, our Founder, beneficially controlled approximately 55% of the voting power of our capital stock. Accordingly, except to the extent that a class vote of the common stock or Class A common stock is required by applicable law or our charter, he can effectively control all matters requiring stockholder approval, including the election of our directors, and can exert substantial control over our management and policies. The disproportionate voting rights of our common stock and Class B common stock and Mr. Brown's substantial holdings of Class B common stock and common stock could have an adverse effect on the market price of our common stock and Class A common stock. Also, such disproportionate voting rights and Mr. Brown's controlling interest may make us a less attractive target for a takeover than we otherwise might be, or render more difficult or discourage a merger proposal, tender offer or proxy contest, even if such actions were favored by our other stockholders, which could thereby deprive holders of common stock or Class A common stock of an opportunity to sell their shares for a take-over premium.

We have authorized the issuance of shares of common stock, Class A common stock and preferred stock, which may discourage potential acquisitions of our business and could have an adverse effect on the market price of our common stock and our Class A common stock.

Pursuant to our Fourth Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, our board of directors is authorized to issue up to 80,000,000 shares of our common stock, 100,000,000 shares of our nonvoting Class A

S-11

Table of Contents

common stock, 3,000,000 shares of our Class B common stock and up to 1,000,000 additional shares of preferred stock without seeking the approval or consent of our stockholders, unless required by the NASDAQ Global Select Market. Although the issuance of the additional shares of nonvoting Class A common stock would not dilute the voting rights of the existing stockholders, it would have a dilutive effect on the economic interest of currently outstanding shares of common stock and Class B common stock similar to the dilutive effect of subsequent issuances of ordinary common stock. The issuance of preferred stock could, depending on the rights and privileges designated by the board with respect to any particular series, have a dilutive effect on the voting interests of the common stock and Class B common stock and the economic interests of our common stock, Class A common stock and Class B common stock. In addition, the disproportionate voting rights of our common stock, Class B common stock and Class A common stock, and the ability of the board to issue stock to persons friendly to current management, may make us a less attractive target for a takeover than we otherwise might be or render more difficult or discourage a merger proposal, tender offer or proxy contest, even if such actions were favored by our common stockholders, which could thereby deprive holders of common stock or Class A common stock of an opportunity to sell their shares for a take-over premium.

Certain provisions in our certificate of incorporation and bylaws, as amended, and of Delaware law, may prevent or delay an acquisition of our Company, which could decrease the trading price of our Class A common stock.

Our Fourth Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, our Amended and Restated By-laws and Delaware law contain provisions that are intended to deter coercive takeover practices and inadequate takeover bids by making such practices or bids unacceptably expensive to the raider and to encourage prospective acquirers to negotiate with our board of directors rather than to attempt a hostile takeover. These provisions include, among others:

the inability of our stockholders to call a special meeting;

rules regarding how stockholders may present proposals or nominate directors for election at stockholder meetings;

the right of our board of directors to issue preferred stock without stockholder approval; and

a majority requirement to amend our certificate of incorporation.

Delaware law also imposes some restrictions on mergers and other business combinations between us and any holder of 15% or more of our outstanding voting stock.

We believe these provisions may help protect our stockholders from coercive or otherwise unfair takeover tactics by requiring potential acquirers to negotiate with our board of directors and by providing our board of directors with more time to assess any acquisition proposal. These provisions are not intended to make our Company immune from takeovers. In addition, although we believe these provisions collectively provide for an opportunity to receive higher bids by requiring potential acquirers to negotiate with our board of directors, they would apply even if the offer may be considered beneficial by some stockholders. These provisions may also frustrate or prevent any attempts by our stockholders to replace or remove our current management team by making it more difficult for stockholders to replace members of our board of directors, which is responsible for appointing the members of our management.

We may allocate the net proceeds from this offering in ways that you and other stockholders may not approve.

We expect to use the net proceeds from this offering for general corporate purposes, including potential acquisitions. In general, our management will have broad discretion in the application of the net proceeds from this offering and could spend the net proceeds in ways that do not necessarily improve our operating results or enhance the value of our Class A common stock.

S-12

Table of Contents

Our stock price may be volatile, and your investment in our Class A common stock could suffer a decline in value.

The price of our Class A common stock has been in the past, and will continue to be, subject to fluctuations, and you may not be able to resell your shares at or above the price at which you purchased your shares. Factors which could have a significant impact on the market price of our Class A common stock include, but are not limited to, the following, most of which we cannot control:

quarterly variations in operating results;

changes in preference by our customers;

announcements of new products or significant price reductions by us or our competitors or other actions by our competitors;

the gain or loss of significant customers;

stock price performance or changes in the market valuations of our competitors;

changes in analysts' earnings estimates or publication of research reports about our industry;

rumors or dissemination of false information;

default on our indebtedness;

changes in our senior management or key personnel;

pricing pressures;

fluctuations in stock market prices and volumes;

short selling of our stock;

litigation and government inquiries;

general conditions in the market;

political and/or military events associated with current worldwide conflicts; and

events affecting other companies that investors deem comparable to us.

These and other factors may cause the market price and demand for our Class A common stock to fluctuate substantially, which may limit or prevent investors from readily selling their shares of Class A common stock and may otherwise negatively affect the liquidity of our Class A common stock. Volatility in the market price of our Class A common stock could also subject us to securities class action litigation. Securities litigation against us could result in substantial costs and a diversion of our management's attention and resources, which could have an adverse effect on our business.

Future sales of our Class A common stock could cause the market price for our Class A common stock to decline.

We cannot predict the effect, if any, that market sales of shares of our Class A common stock or the availability of shares of our Class A common stock for sale will have on the market price of our Class A common

Table of Contents

stock prevailing from time to time. Sales of substantial amounts of shares of our Class A common stock in the public market, or the perception that those sales will occur, could cause the market price of our Class A common stock to decline or be depressed.

The shares of Class A common stock issued in connection with this offering will be freely tradable without restriction or further registration under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act).

In connection with this offering, pursuant to lock-up agreements with the underwriters, we and our directors and executive officers have agreed not to sell or transfer any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock or securities convertible into, exchangeable for, exercisable for, or repayable with any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock, for 90 days after the date of this prospectus supplement without first obtaining the written consent of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated and J.P. Morgan Securities LLC, subject to certain limited exceptions. Following the expiration of the applicable lock-up period, all these shares will also be eligible for future sale.

In the future, we may also issue our securities if we need to raise capital in connection with a capital expenditure or acquisition. The amount of shares of our Class A common stock issued in connection with a capital expenditure or acquisition could constitute a material portion of our then-outstanding shares of Class A common stock. Any perceived excess in the supply of our shares in the market could negatively impact our share price and any issuance of additional securities in connection with investments or acquisitions may result in additional dilution to you.

We may decide or be required to issue, including upon the exercise of any outstanding stock options, or in connection with any acquisition made by us, additional shares of our common stock or Class A common stock that could dilute the value of your common stock or Class A common stock and may adversely affect the market price of our common stock or Class A common stock.

Table of Contents

**PRICE RANGE OF OUR COMMON STOCK AND
CLASS A COMMON STOCK**

Our common stock has been traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CENT since our initial public offering on July 15, 1993. Our Class A common stock has been traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol CENTA since February 6, 2007. The following table sets forth the high and low closing sale prices for our common stock and our Class A common stock, as reported by the NASDAQ Global Select Market, for each quarterly period during our fiscal years set forth below.

	Common Stock		Class A Common Stock	
	High	Low	High	Low
Fiscal 2016				
First Quarter	\$ 17.93	\$ 13.35	\$ 18.54	\$ 13.65
Second Quarter	16.21	12.05	16.14	12.02
Third Quarter	22.54	14.82	21.29	14.80
Fourth Quarter	27.62	21.21	25.51	20.12
Fiscal 2017				
First Quarter	34.25	23.21	31.97	22.27
Second Quarter	37.67	31.86	35.16	30.00
Third Quarter	39.09	29.50	36.55	28.51
Fourth Quarter	38.84	30.71	37.19	29.29
Fiscal 2018				
First Quarter	42.02	35.39	40.73	34.19
Second Quarter	43.00	36.18	39.88	35.01
Third Quarter	44.20	36.34	41.30	34.12
Fourth Quarter (to August 3, 2018)	44.94	42.59	41.73	39.55

On August 3, 2018, the last reported sale price of our Class A common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market was \$40.28 per share.

Table of Contents

DIVIDEND POLICY

We have not paid any cash dividends on our common stock or our Class A common stock in the past. We currently intend to retain any earnings for use in our business and do not anticipate paying any cash dividends on our common stock or our Class A common stock in the foreseeable future. In addition, our credit facility and senior notes restrict our ability to pay dividends. See Note 10 to our fiscal 2017 consolidated financial statements incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

S-16

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

The net proceeds from the sale of the Class A common stock, after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us, will be approximately \$ million, or approximately \$ million if the underwriters exercise their option to purchase additional shares in full.

We expect to use the net proceeds from this offering for general corporate purposes, including funding potential acquisitions. Currently, we have no acquisitions pending. We will invest the net proceeds of this offering in short-term government securities, money market funds, or other investment vehicles permitted under our investment policy until suitable acquisitions are identified or funds are invested in our business.

S-17

Table of Contents**CAPITALIZATION**

The following table sets forth our cash and cash equivalents and capitalization, both on an actual basis and as adjusted to give effect to this offering. You should read this table in conjunction with Use of proceeds and our consolidated financial statements, including the related notes, incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

(in thousands, except share amounts)	As of June 30, 2018	
	Actual	As Adjusted
Cash and cash equivalents (1)	\$ 204,388	\$
Debt, including current installments:		
Senior secured revolving credit facility	\$	\$
6.125% Senior notes due 2023 (2)	395,757	
5.125% Senior notes due 2028 (2)	295,502	
Other (3)	601	
Total debt	691,860	
Shareholders' equity		
Common stock, \$0.01 par value; 12,145,135 shares outstanding	121	
Class A common stock, \$0.01 par value; 38,373,324 shares outstanding	384	
Class B common stock, \$0.01 par value; 1,652,262 shares outstanding	16	
Additional paid-in capital	392,412	
Retained earnings	352,355	
Accumulated other comprehensive income	(1,153)	
Total Central Garden & Pet Company shareholders' equity	\$ 744,135	\$

(1) Excludes \$14.0 million of restricted cash as of June 30, 2018 used as collateral for outstanding letters of credit.

(2) Reflects unamortized debt issuance costs.

(3) Consists of other notes payable.

The table above excludes 2,381,600 shares of Class A common stock issuable upon exercise of stock options outstanding under our stock option plan on June 30, 2018, of which options for 626,202 shares of Class A common stock were exercisable on that date.

Table of Contents

CERTAIN U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a summary of certain material U.S. federal income tax and estate tax consequences to non-U.S. holders relating to the ownership and disposition of our Class A common stock, but does not purport to be a complete analysis of all the potential tax considerations relating thereto. This summary is based upon the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code), Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder, administrative rulings and judicial decisions, all as in effect on the date hereof. These authorities may be changed, possibly retroactively, so as to result in U.S. federal income or estate tax consequences different from those set forth below. We have not sought any ruling from the Internal Revenue Service, or the IRS, with respect to the statements made and the conclusions reached in the following summary, and there can be no assurance that the IRS will agree with such statements and conclusions.

This summary also does not address the tax considerations arising under the laws of any non-U.S., state or local jurisdiction or under U.S. federal gift and estate tax laws, except to the limited extent set forth below. In addition, this discussion does not address tax considerations applicable to a non-U.S. holder's particular circumstances or to non-U.S. holders that may be subject to special tax rules, including, without limitation:

banks, insurance companies or other financial institutions;

persons subject to the alternative minimum tax;

tax-exempt organizations;

controlled foreign corporations, passive foreign investment companies and corporations that accumulate earnings to avoid U.S. federal income tax;

partnerships or other entities treated as pass-through entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes;

dealers in securities or currencies;

traders in securities that elect to use a mark-to-market method of accounting for their securities holdings;

persons that own, or are deemed to own, more than five percent of our Class A common stock, except to the extent specifically set forth below;

certain former citizens or long-term residents of the U.S.;

persons who hold our Class A common stock as part of a straddle, hedge, conversion, constructive sale, or other integrated security transaction; or

persons who do not hold our Class A common stock as a capital asset (within the meaning of Section 1221 of the Code).

If a partnership or entity classified as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes holds our Class A common stock, the tax treatment of a partner generally will depend on the status of the partner and upon the activities of the partnership. Accordingly, partnerships that hold our Class A common stock, and partners in such partnerships, should consult their tax advisors.

You are urged to consult your tax advisor with respect to the application of the U.S. federal income tax laws to your particular situation, as well as any tax consequences of the purchase, ownership and disposition of our Class A common stock arising under the U.S. federal estate or gift tax rules or under the laws of any state, local, non-U.S. or other taxing jurisdiction or under any applicable tax treaty.

S-19

Table of Contents

Non-U.S. Holder Defined

For purposes of this discussion, a non-U.S. holder is a beneficial owner of shares of our Class A common stock that is not, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, a partnership or any of the following:

an individual citizen or resident of the U.S.;

a corporation (or other entity treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes) created or organized in or under the laws of the U.S., any state thereof, or the District of Columbia;

an estate whose income is subject to U.S. federal income tax regardless of its source; or

a trust (x) whose administration is subject to the primary supervision of a U.S. court and which has one or more U.S. persons who have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (y) which has made an election to be treated as a U.S. person.

Distributions

If we make a distribution of cash or other property in respect of our Class A common stock, the distribution will be treated as a dividend to the extent it is paid from our current or accumulated earnings and profits (as determined under U.S. federal income tax principles). If the amount of a distribution exceeds our current and accumulated earnings and profits, such excess first will be treated as a tax-free return of capital to the extent of the non-U.S. holder's adjusted tax basis in our Class A common stock, and thereafter will be treated as capital gain. Distributions treated as dividends on our Class A common stock held by a non-U.S. holder generally will be subject to U.S. federal withholding tax at a rate of 30%, or at a lower rate if provided by an applicable income tax treaty and the non-U.S. holder has provided the documentation required to claim benefits under such treaty. Generally, to claim the benefits of an income tax treaty, a non-U.S. holder will be required to provide a properly completed and executed IRS Form W-8BEN or IRS Form W-8BEN-E.

If, however, a dividend is effectively connected with the conduct of a trade or business in the U.S. by the non-U.S. holder (and, if an applicable tax treaty so provides, is attributable to a permanent establishment or fixed base maintained by the non-U.S. holder in the U.S.), the dividend will not be subject to the 30% U.S. federal withholding tax (provided the non-U.S. holder has provided the appropriate documentation, generally an IRS Form W-8ECI, to the withholding agent), but the non-U.S. holder generally will be subject to U.S. federal income tax in respect of the dividend on a net income basis, and at graduated rates, in substantially the same manner as U.S. persons. Dividends received by a non-U.S. holder that is a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes and which are effectively connected with the conduct of a U.S. trade or business may also be subject to a branch profits tax at the rate of 30% (or a lower rate if provided by an applicable tax treaty).

A non-U.S. holder that is eligible for a reduced rate of U.S. federal withholding tax under an income tax treaty may obtain a refund or credit of any excess amounts withheld by timely filing an appropriate claim for a refund together with the required information with the IRS.

Gain on Disposition of Class A Common Stock

Subject to the discussion below of the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and backup withholding, a non-U.S. holder generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income or withholding tax on any gain realized on the sale or other disposition of our Class A common stock unless:

such non-U.S. holder is an individual who is present in the U.S. for 183 days or more in the taxable year of such sale or disposition, and certain other conditions are met;

S-20

Table of Contents

such gain is effectively connected with the conduct by the non-U.S. holder of a trade or business in the U.S. (and, if an applicable tax treaty so provides, is attributable to a permanent establishment or a fixed base maintained by the non-U.S. holder in the U.S.); or

our Class A common stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest by reason of our status as a United States real property holding corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes (a USRPHC) at any time within the shorter of the five-year period preceding the disposition or the non-U.S. holder's holding period for our Class A common stock.

A non-U.S. holder that is an individual and who is present in the U.S. for 183 days or more in the taxable year of such sale or disposition, if certain other conditions are met, will be subject to tax at a gross rate of 30% on the amount by which such non-U.S. holder's taxable capital gains allocable to U.S. sources, including gain from the sale or other disposition of our Class A common stock, exceed capital losses allocable to U.S. sources, except as otherwise provided in an applicable income tax treaty.

Gain realized by a non-U.S. holder that is effectively connected with such non-U.S. holder's conduct of a trade or business in the U.S. generally will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a net income basis, and at graduated rates, in substantially the same manner as a U.S. person (except as provided by an applicable tax treaty). In addition, if such non-U.S. holder is a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes, it may also be subject to a branch profits tax at the rate of 30% (or a lower rate if provided by an applicable tax treaty).

Generally, a corporation is a USRPHC if the fair market value of its U.S. real property interests equals or exceeds 50% of the sum of the fair market value of its worldwide real property interests and its other assets used or held for use in a trade or business (all as determined for U.S. federal income tax purposes). We do not believe that we are, and do not anticipate becoming, a USRPHC. However, there can be no assurances that we will not become a USRPHC in the future. If, however, we are a USRPHC during the applicable testing period, as long as our Class A common stock is regularly traded on an established securities market (such as the NASDAQ Global Select Market), our Class A common stock will be treated as a U.S. real property interest only for a non-U.S. holder who actually or constructively holds (at any time within the shorter of the five-year period preceding the disposition or the non-U.S. holder's holding period) more than 5% of such regularly traded stock. Please note, though, that we can provide no assurance that our Class A common stock will remain regularly traded.

Federal Estate Tax

Our Class A common stock beneficially owned by an individual who is not a citizen or resident of the U.S. (as defined for U.S. federal estate tax purposes) at the time of death will generally be includable in the decedent's gross estate for U.S. federal estate tax purposes, unless an applicable estate tax treaty provides otherwise.

Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act

Sections 1471 through 1474 of the Code, the FATCA provisions, impose U.S. withholding tax at a 30% rate on certain types of payments made to foreign entities. Failure to comply with the certification, information reporting and other specified requirements imposed under FATCA could result in such U.S. withholding tax being imposed on payments of dividend distributions and sales proceeds of Class A common stock held by or through a foreign entity. Treasury Regulations provide that FATCA withholding generally applies to payments of dividend distributions, and will apply to gross proceeds from the sale or other disposition of Class A common stock after December 31, 2018. An intergovernmental agreement between the U.S. and an applicable foreign country may modify the general FATCA requirements. Prospective investors should consult their own tax advisors regarding FATCA and its effect on them.

Table of Contents

Backup Withholding and Information Reporting

Generally, payors must report annually to the IRS the amount of dividends paid to a non-U.S. holder, the non-U.S. holder's name and address, and the amount of tax withheld, if any. A similar report is sent to the non-U.S. holder. Pursuant to applicable income tax treaties or other agreements, the IRS may make these reports available to tax authorities in the non-U.S. holder's country of residence.

Payments of dividends or of proceeds on the disposition of stock made to a non-U.S. holder may be subject to additional information reporting and backup withholding unless the non-U.S. holder establishes an exemption, for example by properly certifying the non-U.S. holder's status on an IRS Form W-8BEN, IRS Form W-8BEN-E or another appropriate version of IRS Form W-8. Notwithstanding the foregoing, backup withholding and information reporting may apply if the payor has actual knowledge, or reason to know, that the non-U.S. holder is a U.S. person.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax; rather, the U.S. income tax liability of persons subject to backup withholding will be reduced by the amount of tax withheld. If withholding results in an overpayment of taxes, a refund or credit may generally be obtained from the IRS, provided that the required information is furnished to the IRS in a timely manner.

The preceding discussion of U.S. federal tax considerations is for general information only. It is not tax advice. Each prospective investor should consult its own tax advisor regarding the particular U.S. federal, state and local and non-U.S. tax consequences of purchasing, holding and disposing of our Class A common stock, including the consequences of any proposed change in applicable laws.

Table of Contents

CERTAIN ERISA CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a summary of certain considerations associated with the purchase of the Class A common stock by employee benefit plans that are subject to Title I of the U.S. Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (ERISA), plans, individual retirement accounts and other arrangements that are subject to Section 4975 of the Code or provisions under any U.S. or non-U.S. federal, state, local or other laws or regulations that are similar to such provisions of the Code or ERISA (collectively, Similar Laws), and entities whose underlying assets are considered to include plan assets of any such plan, account or arrangement (each, a Plan).

General Fiduciary Matters

ERISA and the Code impose certain duties on persons who are fiduciaries of a Plan subject to Title I of ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code (an ERISA Plan) and prohibit certain transactions involving the assets of an ERISA Plan and its fiduciaries or other interested parties. Under ERISA and the Code, any person who exercises any discretionary authority or control over the administration of such an ERISA Plan or the management or disposition of the assets of such an ERISA Plan, or who renders investment advice for a fee or other compensation to such a Plan, is generally considered to be a fiduciary of the ERISA Plan.

In considering an investment in the Class A common stock of a portion of the assets of any Plan, a fiduciary should determine whether the investment is in accordance with the documents and instruments governing the Plan and the applicable provisions of ERISA, the Code or any Similar Law relating to a fiduciary's duties to the Plan including, without limitation, the prudence, diversification, delegation of control and prohibited transaction provisions of ERISA, the Code and any other applicable Similar Laws.

Prohibited Transaction Issues

Section 406 of ERISA and Section 4975 of the Code prohibit ERISA Plans from engaging in specified transactions involving plan assets with persons or entities who are parties in interest, within the meaning of ERISA, or disqualified persons, within the meaning of Section 4975 of the Code, unless an exemption is available. A party in interest or disqualified person who engaged in a non-exempt prohibited transaction may be subject to excise taxes and other penalties and liabilities under ERISA and the Code. In addition, the fiduciary of the ERISA Plan that engaged in such a non-exempt prohibited transaction may be subject to penalties and liabilities under ERISA and the Code.

The acquisition of the Class A common stock by an ERISA Plan with respect to which we or the underwriters and our and their respective affiliates is considered a party in interest or a disqualified person may constitute or result in a direct or indirect prohibited transaction under Section 406 of ERISA and/or Section 4975 of the Code, unless the investment is acquired and is held in accordance with an applicable statutory, class or individual prohibited transaction exemption. In this regard, the U.S. Department of Labor has issued prohibited transaction class exemptions, or

PTCEs, that may apply to the acquisition and holding of the Class A common stock. These class exemptions include, without limitation, PTCE 84-14 respecting transactions determined by independent qualified professional asset managers, PTCE 90-1 respecting insurance company pooled separate accounts, PTCE 91-38 respecting bank collective investment funds, PTCE 95-60 respecting life insurance company general accounts and PTCE 96-23 respecting transactions determined by in-house asset managers. Each of the above-noted exemptions contains conditions and limitations on its application. Fiduciaries of ERISA Plans considering acquiring our Class A common stock in reliance on these or any other exemption should carefully review the exemption to assure it is applicable. There can be no assurance that all of the conditions of any such exemptions will be satisfied.

Representation

Accordingly, by acceptance of the Class A common stock, each purchaser and subsequent transferee of the Class A common stock will be deemed to have represented and warranted that either (i) no portion of the

S-23

Table of Contents

assets used by such purchaser or transferee to acquire and hold the Class A common stock constitutes the assets of any Plan or (ii) the purchase and holding of the Class A common stock by such purchaser or transferee will not result in a non-exempt prohibited transaction under Section 406 of ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code or similar violation under any applicable Similar Laws.

The foregoing discussion is general in nature and is not intended to be all-inclusive. Due to the complexity of these rules and the penalties that may be imposed upon persons involved in non-exempt prohibited transactions, it is particularly important that fiduciaries, or other persons considering purchasing the Class A common stock on behalf of, or with the assets of, any Plan, consult with their counsel regarding the potential applicability of ERISA, Section 4975 of the Code and any Similar Laws to such investment and whether an exemption would be applicable to the purchase and holding of the Class A common stock.

Table of Contents**UNDERWRITING**

Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated, J.P. Morgan Securities LLC, BMO Capital Markets Corp. and SunTrust Robinson Humphrey, Inc. are acting as representatives of each of the underwriters named below. Subject to the terms and conditions set forth in an underwriting agreement among us and the underwriters, we have agreed to sell to the underwriters, and each of the underwriters has agreed, severally and not jointly, to purchase from us, the number of shares of Class A common stock set forth opposite its name below.

<u>Underwriter</u>	Number of Shares
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated	
J.P. Morgan Securities LLC	
BMO Capital Markets Corp.	
SunTrust Robinson Humphrey, Inc.	
Barclays Capital Inc.	
KeyBanc Capital Markets Inc.	
Total	

Subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the underwriting agreement, the underwriters have agreed, severally and not jointly, to purchase all of the shares sold under the underwriting agreement if any of these shares are purchased. If an underwriter defaults, the underwriting agreement provides that the purchase commitments of the nondefaulting underwriters may be increased or the underwriting agreement may be terminated.

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

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

Commissions and Discounts

The representatives have advised us that the underwriters propose initially to offer the shares of Class A common stock to the public at the public offering price set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement and to dealers at that price less a concession not in excess of \$ _____ per share. After the initial offering, the public offering price, concession or any other term of the offering may be changed.

The following table shows the public offering price, underwriting discount and proceeds before expenses to us. The information assumes either no exercise or full exercise by the underwriters of their option to purchase additional shares of Class A common stock.

	Per Share	Without Option	With Option
Public offering price	\$	\$	\$
Underwriting discounts and commissions	\$	\$	\$
Proceeds, before expenses, to us	\$	\$	\$

S-25

Table of Contents

The expenses of the offering, not including underwriting discounts and commissions are estimated at \$ and are payable by us. We have also agreed to reimburse the underwriters for certain reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.

Option to Purchase Additional Shares

We have granted an option to the underwriters, exercisable for 30 days after the date of this prospectus supplement, to purchase up to additional shares of Class A common stock at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount. If the underwriters exercise this option, each will be obligated, subject to conditions contained in the underwriting agreement, to purchase a number of additional shares proportionate to that underwriter's initial amount reflected in the above table.

No Sales of Similar Securities

We and our directors and executive officers have agreed not to sell or transfer any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock or securities convertible into, exchangeable for, exercisable for, or repayable with any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock, for 90 days after the date of this prospectus supplement without first obtaining the written consent of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated and J.P. Morgan Securities LLC. Specifically, we and these other persons have agreed, with certain limited exceptions, not to directly or indirectly

offer, pledge, sell or contract to sell any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock,

sell any option or contract to purchase any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock,

purchase any option or contract to sell any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock,

grant any option, right or warrant for the sale of any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock,

lend or otherwise dispose of or transfer any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock,

request or demand that we file a registration statement related to the common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock, or

enter into any swap or other agreement that transfers, in whole or in part, the economic consequence of ownership of any shares of our common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock whether

any such swap or transaction is to be settled by delivery of shares or other securities, in cash or otherwise.

This lock-up provision applies to common stock, Class A common stock and Class B common stock and to securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for or repayable with common stock, Class A common stock or Class B common stock. It also applies to common stock, Class A common stock and Class B common stock owned now or acquired later by the person executing the agreement or for which the person executing the agreement later acquires the power of disposition.

These restrictions will not apply, among other things, to the sale of shares of our common stock or Class A common stock pursuant to an existing sales plan in accordance with Rule 10b5-1 promulgated under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act), or the entry into any such sales plan so long as no sales are made during the lock-up period.

S-26

Table of Contents

Nasdaq Global Market Listing

The shares of Class A common stock are listed on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the symbol CENTA.

Price Stabilization, Short Positions

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

In connection with the offering, the underwriters may purchase and sell our Class A common stock in the open market. These transactions may include short sales, purchases on the open market to cover positions created by short sales and stabilizing transactions. Short sales involve the sale by the underwriters of a greater number of shares than they are required to purchase in the offering. Covered short sales are sales made in an amount not greater than the underwriters' option to purchase additional shares described above. The underwriters may close out any covered short position by either exercising their option to purchase additional shares or purchasing shares in the open market. In determining the source of shares to close out the covered short position, the underwriters will consider, among other things, the price of shares available for purchase in the open market as compared to the price at which they may purchase shares through the option granted to them. Naked short sales are sales in excess of such option. The underwriters must close out any naked short position by purchasing shares in the open market. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriters are concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of our Class A common stock in the open market after pricing that could adversely affect investors who purchase in the offering. Stabilizing transactions consist of various bids for or purchases of shares of Class A common stock made by the underwriters in the open market prior to the completion of the offering.

Similar to other purchase transactions, the underwriters' purchases to cover the syndicate short sales may have the effect of raising or maintaining the market price of our Class A common stock or preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of our Class A common stock. As a result, the price of our Class A common stock may be higher than the price that might otherwise exist in the open market. The underwriters may conduct these transactions on the Nasdaq Global Select Market, in the over-the-counter market or otherwise.

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

Passive Market Making

In connection with this offering, underwriters and selling group members may engage in passive market making transactions in the Class A common stock on the Nasdaq Global Select Market in accordance with Rule 103 of Regulation M under the Exchange Act during a period before the commencement of offers or sales of Class A common stock and extending through the completion of distribution. A passive market maker must display its bid at a price not in excess of the highest independent bid of that security. However, if all independent bids are lowered below the passive market maker's bid, that bid must then be lowered when specified purchase limits are exceeded. Passive market making may cause the price of our Class A common stock to be higher than the price that otherwise would exist in the open market in the absence of those transactions. The underwriters and dealers are not required to engage in passive market making and may end passive market making activities at any time.

S-27

Table of Contents

Electronic Distribution

In connection with the offering, certain of the underwriters or securities dealers may distribute prospectuses by electronic means, such as e-mail.

Other Relationships

Some of the underwriters and their affiliates have engaged in, and may in the future engage in, investment banking and other commercial dealings in the ordinary course of business with us or our affiliates. They have received, or may in the future receive, customary fees and commissions for these transactions.

In particular, certain of the underwriters and/or their affiliates are lenders under our senior secured revolving credit facility. Under our senior secured revolving credit facility, SunTrust Bank, an affiliate of SunTrust Robinson Humphrey, Inc., acts as issuing bank and administrative agent, and SunTrust Robinson Humphrey, Inc., as left lead arranger and joint bookrunner; Bank of America, N.A., an affiliate of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated, acts as co-syndication agent in addition to joint lead arranger and joint bookrunner; and BMO Harris Bank, N.A., an affiliate of BMO Capital Markets Corp., JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., an affiliate of J.P. Morgan Securities LLC, and KeyBank National Association, an affiliate of KeyBanc Capital Markets Inc., act as co-documentation agents.

In addition, in the ordinary course of their business activities, the underwriters and their affiliates may make or hold a broad array of investments and actively trade debt and equity securities (or related derivative securities) and financial instruments (including bank loans) for their own account and for the accounts of their customers. Such investments and securities activities may involve securities and/or instruments of ours or our affiliates. The underwriters and their affiliates may also make investment recommendations and/or publish or express independent research views in respect of such securities or financial instruments and may hold, or recommend to clients that they acquire, long and/or short positions in such securities and instruments.

Notice to Prospective Investors in the European Economic Area

In relation to each member state of the European Economic Area, no offer of ordinary shares which are the subject of the offering has been, or will be made to the public in that Member State, other than under the following exemptions under the Prospectus Directive:

- (a) to any legal entity which is a qualified investor as defined in the Prospectus Directive;
- (b) to fewer than 150 natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the Prospectus Directive), subject to obtaining the prior consent of the Representatives for any such offer; or
- (c) in any other circumstances falling within Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive, *provided* that no such offer of ordinary shares referred to in (a) to (c) above shall result in a requirement for the Company or any Representative to publish a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive, or supplement a prospectus pursuant to Article 16 of the Prospectus Directive.

Each person located in a Member State to whom any offer of ordinary shares is made or who receives any communication in respect of an offer of ordinary shares, or who initially acquires any ordinary shares will be deemed to have represented, warranted, acknowledged and agreed to and with each Representative and the Company that (1) it is a qualified investor within the meaning of the law in that Member State implementing Article 2(1)(e) of the Prospectus Directive; and (2) in the case of any ordinary shares acquired by it as a financial intermediary as that term is used in Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive, the ordinary shares acquired by it in

S-28

Table of Contents

the offer have not been acquired on behalf of, nor have they been acquired with a view to their offer or resale to, persons in any Member State other than qualified investors, as that term is defined in the Prospectus Directive, or in circumstances in which the prior consent of the Representatives has been given to the offer or resale; or where ordinary shares have been acquired by it on behalf of persons in any Member State other than qualified investors, the offer of those ordinary shares to it is not treated under the Prospectus Directive as having been made to such persons.

The Company, the representatives and their respective affiliates will rely upon the truth and accuracy of the foregoing representations, acknowledgments and agreements.

This prospectus supplement has been prepared on the basis that any offer of shares in any Member State will be made pursuant to an exemption under the Prospectus Directive from the requirement to publish a prospectus for offers of shares. Accordingly any person making or intending to make an offer in that Member State of shares which are the subject of the offering contemplated in this prospectus supplement may only do so in circumstances in which no obligation arises for the Company or any of the Representatives to publish a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive in relation to such offer. Neither the Company nor the Representatives have authorized, nor do they authorize, the making of any offer of shares in circumstances in which an obligation arises for the Company or the Representatives to publish a prospectus for such offer.

For the purposes of this provision, the expression an offer of ordinary shares to the public in relation to any ordinary shares in any Member State means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of the offer and the ordinary shares to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase or subscribe the ordinary shares, as the same may be varied in that Member State by any measure implementing the Prospectus Directive in that Member State, the expression Prospectus Directive means Directive 2003/71/EC (as amended) and includes any relevant implementing measure in each Member State.

The above selling restriction is in addition to any other selling restrictions set out below.

Notice to Prospective Investors in the United Kingdom

In addition, in the United Kingdom, this document is being distributed only to, and is directed only at, and any offer subsequently made may only be directed at persons who are qualified investors (as defined in the Prospectus Directive) (i) who have professional experience in matters relating to investments falling within Article 19 (5) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005, as amended (the Order) and/or (ii) who are high net worth companies (or persons to whom it may otherwise be lawfully communicated) falling within Article 49(2)(a) to (d) of the Order (all such persons together being referred to as relevant persons). This document must not be acted on or relied on in the United Kingdom by persons who are not relevant persons. In the United Kingdom, any investment or investment activity to which this document relates is only available to, and will be engaged in with, relevant persons.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Switzerland

The shares may not be publicly offered in Switzerland and will not be listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange (SIX) or on any other stock exchange or regulated trading facility in Switzerland. This document has been prepared without regard to the disclosure standards for issuance prospectuses under art. 652a or art. 1156 of the Swiss Code of Obligations or the disclosure standards for listing prospectuses under art. 27 ff. of the SIX Listing Rules or the listing rules of any other stock exchange or regulated trading facility in Switzerland. Neither this document nor any other offering or marketing material relating to the shares or the offering may be publicly distributed or otherwise made publicly available in Switzerland.

Neither this document nor any other offering or marketing material relating to the offering, the Company, the shares have been or will be filed with or approved by any Swiss regulatory authority. In particular,

S-29

Table of Contents

this document will not be filed with, and the offer of shares will not be supervised by, the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA, and the offer of shares has not been and will not be authorized under the Swiss Federal Act on Collective Investment Schemes (CISA). The investor protection afforded to acquirers of interests in collective investment schemes under the CISA does not extend to acquirers of shares.

Notice to Prospective Investors in the Dubai International Financial Centre

This prospectus supplement relates to an Exempt Offer in accordance with the Offered Securities Rules of the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA). This prospectus supplement is intended for distribution only to persons of a type specified in the Offered Securities Rules of the DFSA. It must not be delivered to, or relied on by, any other person. The DFSA has no responsibility for reviewing or verifying any documents in connection with Exempt Offers. The DFSA has not approved this prospectus supplement nor taken steps to verify the information set forth herein and has no responsibility for the prospectus supplement. The shares to which this prospectus supplement relates may be illiquid and/or subject to restrictions on their resale. Prospective purchasers of the shares offered should conduct their own due diligence on the shares. If you do not understand the contents of this prospectus supplement you should consult an authorized financial advisor.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Australia

No placement document, prospectus, product disclosure statement or other disclosure document has been lodged with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), in relation to the offering. This prospectus supplement does not constitute a prospectus, product disclosure statement or other disclosure document under the Corporations Act 2001 (the Corporations Act), and does not purport to include the information required for a prospectus, product disclosure statement or other disclosure document under the Corporations Act.

Any offer in Australia of the shares may only be made to persons (the Exempt Investors) who are sophisticated investors (within the meaning of section 708(8) of the Corporations Act), professional investors (within the meaning of section 708(11) of the Corporations Act) or otherwise pursuant to one or more exemptions contained in section 708 of the Corporations Act so that it is lawful to offer the shares without disclosure to investors under Chapter 6D of the Corporations Act.

The shares applied for by Exempt Investors in Australia must not be offered for sale in Australia in the period of 12 months after the date of allotment under the offering, except in circumstances where disclosure to investors under Chapter 6D of the Corporations Act would not be required pursuant to an exemption under section 708 of the Corporations Act or otherwise or where the offer is pursuant to a disclosure document which complies with Chapter 6D of the Corporations Act. Any person acquiring shares must observe such Australian on-sale restrictions.

This prospectus supplement contains general information only and does not take account of the investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any particular person. It does not contain any securities recommendations or financial product advice. Before making an investment decision, investors need to consider whether the information in this prospectus supplement is appropriate to their needs, objectives and circumstances, and, if necessary, seek expert advice on those matters.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Hong Kong

The shares have not been offered or sold and will not be offered or sold in Hong Kong, by means of any document, other than (a) to professional investors as defined in the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571) of Hong Kong and any rules made under that Ordinance; or (b) in other circumstances which do not result in the document being a

prospectus as defined in the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 32) of Hong Kong or which do not constitute an offer to the public within the meaning of that Ordinance. No advertisement, invitation or document relating to the shares has been or may be issued or has been or may be in the possession of any person

S-30

Table of Contents

for the purposes of issue, whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere, which is directed at, or the contents of which are likely to be accessed or read by, the public of Hong Kong (except if permitted to do so under the securities laws of Hong Kong) other than with respect to shares which are or are intended to be disposed of only to persons outside Hong Kong or only to professional investors as defined in the Securities and Futures Ordinance and any rules made under that Ordinance.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Japan

The shares have not been and will not be registered under the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law of Japan (Law No. 25 of 1948, as amended) and, accordingly, will not be offered or sold, directly or indirectly, in Japan, or for the benefit of any Japanese Person or to others for re-offering or resale, directly or indirectly, in Japan or to any Japanese Person, except in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and ministerial guidelines promulgated by relevant Japanese governmental or regulatory authorities in effect at the relevant time. For the purposes of this paragraph,

Japanese Person shall mean any person resident in Japan, including any corporation or other entity organized under the laws of Japan.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Singapore

This prospectus supplement has not been registered as a prospectus with the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Accordingly, this prospectus supplement and any other document or material in connection with the offer or sale, or invitation for subscription or purchase, of shares may not be circulated or distributed, nor may the shares be offered or sold, or be made the subject of an invitation for subscription or purchase, whether directly or indirectly, to persons in Singapore other than (i) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the Securities and Futures Act, Chapter 289 of Singapore (the SFA), (ii) to a relevant person pursuant to Section 275(1), or any person pursuant to Section 275(1A), and in accordance with the conditions specified in Section 275, of the SFA, or (iii) otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA.

Where the shares are subscribed or purchased under Section 275 of the SFA by a relevant person which is:

- (a) a corporation (which is not an accredited investor (as defined in Section 4A of the SFA)) the sole business of which is to hold investments and the entire share capital of which is owned by one or more individuals, each of whom is an accredited investor; or
- (b) a trust (where the trustee is not an accredited investor) whose sole purpose is to hold investments and each beneficiary of the trust is an individual who is an accredited investor, securities (as defined in Section 239(1) of the SFA) of that corporation or the beneficiaries' rights and interest (howsoever described) in that trust shall not be transferred within six months after that corporation or that trust has acquired the shares pursuant to an offer made under Section 275 of the SFA except:
 - (b) to an institutional investor or to a relevant person defined in Section 275(2) of the SFA, or to any person arising from an offer referred to in Section 275(1A) or Section 276(4)(i)(B) of the SFA;

- (b) where no consideration is or will be given for the transfer;
- (c) where the transfer is by operation of law;
- (d) as specified in Section 276(7) of the SFA; or
- (e) as specified in Regulation 32 of the Securities and Futures (Offers of Investments) (Shares and Debentures) Regulations 2005 of Singapore.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Canada

The shares may be sold only to purchasers purchasing, or deemed to be purchasing, as principal that are accredited investors, as defined in National Instrument 45-106 *Prospectus Exemptions* or subsection 73.3(1) of

S-31

Table of Contents

the *Securities Act* (Ontario), and are permitted clients, as defined in National Instrument 31-103 *Registration Requirements, Exemptions and Ongoing Registrant Obligations*. Any resale of the shares must be made in accordance with an exemption from, or in a transaction not subject to, the prospectus requirements of applicable securities laws.

Securities legislation in certain provinces or territories of Canada may provide a purchaser with remedies for rescission or damages if this prospectus supplement (including any amendment thereto) contains a misrepresentation, provided that the remedies for rescission or damages are exercised by the purchaser within the time limit prescribed by the securities legislation of the purchaser's province or territory. The purchaser should refer to any applicable provisions of the securities legislation of the purchaser's province or territory for particulars of these rights or consult with a legal advisor.

Pursuant to section 3A.3 (or, in the case of securities issued or guaranteed by the government of a non-Canadian jurisdiction, section 3A.4) of National Instrument 33-105 *Underwriting Conflicts* (NI 33-105), the underwriters are not required to comply with the disclosure requirements of NI 33-105 regarding underwriter conflicts of interest in connection with this offering.

S-32

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities issued hereunder will be passed upon for us by Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, San Francisco, California. Certain legal matters in connection with the offering regarding the validity of the shares of Class A common stock offered hereby will be passed upon for the underwriters by Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, New York, New York.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements incorporated in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus by reference from Central Garden & Pet Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K and the effectiveness of Central Garden & Pet Company's internal control over financial reporting have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their report, which is incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements have been so incorporated in reliance upon the report of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You can read and copy any material we file with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room at:

U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission

100 F Street, NE

Washington, DC 20549

You can also obtain copies of these materials from the public reference room at the SEC at prescribed rates. You can obtain information on the operation of the public reference room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. Our SEC filings are available on the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>, which contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC.

This prospectus supplement omits certain information that is contained in the registration statement on file with the SEC, of which this prospectus supplement is a part. For further information with respect to us, reference is made to the registration statement, including the exhibits incorporated therein by reference or filed therewith. Statements herein contained concerning the provisions of any document are not necessarily complete and, in each instance, reference is made to the copy of such document filed as an exhibit or incorporated by reference to the registration statement. The registration statement and the exhibits may be inspected without charge at the offices of the SEC or copies thereof obtained at prescribed rates from the public reference section of the SEC at the address set forth above. You may also obtain information about us at our Internet website at <http://www.central.com>. However, the information on, or accessible through, our website is not part of this prospectus.

Table of Contents

CERTAIN DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

In this document, we incorporate by reference the information we file with the SEC, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring to that information. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus supplement, and later filed information with the SEC will update and supersede this information. Notwithstanding this statement, however, you may rely on information that has been filed at the time you made your investment decision. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below:

- (a) our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2017;
- (b) our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended December 30, 2017, March 31, 2018 and June 30, 2018;
- (c) our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on December 7, 2017, December 11, 2017, December 14, 2017 and February 20, 2018; and
- (d) the information specifically incorporated by reference into the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2017 from our definitive proxy statement on Schedule 14A, filed on December 22, 2017.

We also incorporate by reference all future filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are filed (excluding, however, information we furnish to the SEC) by us after the date of this prospectus supplement and prior to the termination of this offering.

You may request a copy of all information that has been incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement, at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address or phone number:

Central Garden & Pet Company

1340 Treat Blvd., Suite 600

Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Attention: Investor Relations

Telephone: 1-925-948-4000

You should rely only on the information provided in this document or incorporated in this document by reference. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. You should not assume that the information in this document, including any information incorporated herein by reference, is accurate as of any date other than that on the front of the document. Any statement incorporated herein shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus supplement to the extent that a statement contained herein modifies or supersedes such statement. Any statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

Debt Securities

Subsidiary Guarantees of Debt Securities

Common Stock

Class A Common Stock

Preferred Stock

Warrants

We will provide more specific terms of the securities listed above in supplements to this prospectus or in one or more documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus. The prospectus supplements and documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read this prospectus, including any documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus relating to the specific issue of securities carefully before you invest.

We may offer these securities from time to time in amounts, at prices and on other terms to be determined at the time of offering. In addition, certain selling securityholders to be identified in a prospectus supplement may offer and sell these securities from time to time, in amounts, at prices and on terms that will be determined at the time these securities are offered. We will not receive any proceeds from the sales of these securities held by the selling securityholders.

Our subsidiaries may guarantee any debt securities that we may offer pursuant to this prospectus and a prospectus supplement.

Our common stock and Class A common stock trade on the Nasdaq Stock Market under the symbols **CENT** and **CENTA**, respectively. On December 6, 2017, the last reported sales price of our common stock and Class A common stock was \$41.16 and \$39.95, respectively. We will provide information in the prospectus supplement for the trading market, if any, for any other securities or debt securities we may offer.

Investing in our securities involves risks. You should carefully consider the risk factors set forth in the applicable supplement to this prospectus, any related free writing prospectus and any documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus before investing in any securities that may be offered. See Risk Factors on page 2.

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

The date of this prospectus is December 7, 2017

Table of Contents**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
<u>Central Garden & Pet Company</u>	1
<u>About This Prospectus</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	2
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	2
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	4
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	4
<u>Description of Securities</u>	5
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	5
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	20
<u>Description of the Warrants</u>	23
<u>Selling Securityholders</u>	24
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	25
<u>Validity of the Securities</u>	27
<u>Experts</u>	27
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	27
<u>Certain Documents Incorporated by Reference</u>	27

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

Table of Contents

CENTRAL GARDEN & PET COMPANY

Central Garden & Pet Company is a leading innovator, marketer and producer of quality branded products and distributor of third-party products in the pet and lawn and garden supplies industries in the United States.

Our pet supplies products include products for dogs and cats, including edible bones, premium healthy edible and non-edible chews, super premium dog and cat food and treats, toys, pet carriers, grooming supplies and other accessories; products for birds, small animals and specialty pets, including food, cages and habitats, toys, chews and related accessories; animal and household health and insect control products; live fish and products for fish, reptiles and other aquarium-based pets, including aquariums, furniture and lighting fixtures, pumps, filters, water conditioners, food and supplements, and information and knowledge resources; and products for horses and livestock. These products are sold under the brands including Adams, Aqueon[®], Avoderm[®], Bio Spot Active Care, Cadet[®], Farnam[®], Four Paws[®], Kaytee[®], K&H Pet Products[®], Nylabone[®], Pinnacle[®], TFH, Zilla[®] as well as a number of other brands including Altosid[®], Comfort Zone[®], Coralife[®], Interpet[®], Kent Marine[®], Pet Select[®], Super Pet[®], and Zodiac[®].

Our lawn and garden supplies products include proprietary and non-proprietary grass seed; wild bird feed, bird feeders, bird houses and other birding accessories; weed, grass, ant and other herbicide, insecticide and pesticide products; and decorative outdoor lifestyle products including pottery, trellises and other wood products. These products are sold under the brands AMDRO[®], Ironite[®], Pennington[®], and Sevin[®], as well as a number of other brand names including Lilly Miller[®], Over-N-Out[®], Smart Seed[®] and The Rebels[®].

We were incorporated in Delaware in May 1992 and are the successor to a California corporation that was incorporated in 1955. Our executive offices are located at 1340 Treat Boulevard, Suite 600, Walnut Creek, California 94597, and our telephone number is (925) 948-4000. Our website is www.central.com. The information on, or accessible through, our website is not incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of an automatic shelf registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, using the SEC's shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we or any selling securityholders may sell any of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may sell. Each time we or any selling securityholders sell securities under this prospectus, we will provide you with a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering and of the securities being offered and information regarding the selling securityholders, if any. The prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. If so, the prospectus supplement should be read as superseding this prospectus. You should read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement, any free writing prospectus and the additional information described below under the headings "Where You Can Find More Information" and "Certain Documents Incorporated by Reference."

In this prospectus we use the terms "Central," "we," "us," "our," and "our company" and similar phrases to refer to Central Garden & Pet Company, a Delaware corporation, and its consolidated subsidiaries.

References to "securities" include any security that we might sell under this prospectus or any prospectus supplement.

This prospectus contains summaries of certain provisions contained in some of the documents described herein. Please refer to the actual documents for complete information. All of the summaries are qualified in their entirety by the actual documents. You may obtain copies of those documents as described below under **Where You Can Find More Information** and **Certain Documents Incorporated by Reference**.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in the securities to be offered pursuant to this prospectus may involve a high degree of risk. These risks will be set forth or incorporated by reference in a prospectus supplement relating to the securities to be offered by that prospectus supplement. You should carefully consider the important factors set forth or incorporated by reference under the heading **Risk Factors** in the applicable supplement to this prospectus before investing in any securities that may be offered.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Some statements and disclosures in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, are forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements include statements concerning our plans, objectives, goals, strategies, future events, future revenues or performance, projected cost savings, capital expenditures, financing needs, plans or intentions relating to acquisitions, our competitive strengths and weaknesses, our business strategy and the trends we anticipate in the industries and markets in which we operate and other information that is not historical information. When used in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, the words *estimates, expects, anticipates, projects, plans, intends, believes* and variations of such similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. All forward-looking statements, including, without limitation, our examination of historical operating trends, are based upon our current expectations and various assumptions. Our expectations, beliefs and projections are expressed in good faith, and we believe there is a reasonable basis for them, but we cannot assure you that our expectations, beliefs and projections will be realized.

There are a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause our actual results to differ materially from the forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference. Important factors that could cause our actual results to differ materially from the forward-looking statements we make in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, are set forth in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference, including the factors described in the sections titled **Item 1A Risk Factors** in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended September 24, 2016 and in our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the periods ended December 24, 2016, March 25, 2017 and June 24, 2017. If any of these risks or uncertainties materializes, or if any of our underlying assumptions is incorrect, our actual results may differ significantly from the results that we express in, or imply by, any of our forward-looking statements. We do not undertake any obligation to revise these forward-looking statements to reflect future events or circumstances, except as required by law. Presently known risk factors include, but are not limited to, the following factors:

seasonality and fluctuations in our operating results and cash flow;

fluctuations in market prices for seeds and grains and other raw materials;

our inability to pass through cost increases in a timely manner;

our dependence upon key executives;

risks associated with new product introductions, including the risk that our new products will not produce sufficient sales to recoup our investment;

fluctuations in energy prices, fuel and related petrochemical costs;

declines in consumer spending during economic downturns;

inflation, deflation and other adverse macro-economic conditions;

Table of Contents

supply shortages in pet birds, small animals and fish;

adverse weather conditions;

risks associated with our acquisition strategy;

access to and cost of additional capital;

dependence on a small number of customers for a significant portion of our business;

consolidation trends in the retail industry;

competition in our industries;

potential goodwill or intangible asset impairment;

continuing implementation of an enterprise resource planning information technology system;

our ability to protect our trademarks and other proprietary rights;

potential environmental liabilities;

risk associated with international sourcing;

litigation and product liability claims;

regulatory issues;

the impact of product recalls;

potential costs and risks associated with actual or anticipated cyber attacks;

the impact of the corporate tax reform being considered by the U.S. Congress and the Trump administration;

the voting power associated with our Class B stock; and

potential dilution from issuance of authorized shares.

Readers should carefully review the reports and documents we file from time to time with the SEC, particularly our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q and current reports on Form 8-K. For information about how to obtain a copy of these reports or other documents that we file with the SEC, see [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Table of Contents**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

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

	Fiscal Year Ended			
September 28, 2013(1)	September 27, 2014	September 26, 2015	September 24, 2016	September 30, 2017
	1.3x	2.3x	2.6x	5.4x

(1) For the fiscal year ended September 28, 2013, earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges by approximately \$3.2 million, and the ratio for that fiscal year is not considered meaningful.

For the purpose of computing the ratio of earnings to fixed charges, earnings consist of income (loss) before income taxes and noncontrolling interest and after eliminating undistributed earnings of equity method investees and before fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest expense incurred, the portion of rental expense under operating leases deemed by management to be representative of the interest factor and amortization of deferred financing costs.

For the periods indicated above, we had no outstanding shares of preferred stock with required dividend payments. Therefore, the ratios of earnings to fixed charges and preferred stock dividends are identical to the ratios presented in the table above.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless indicated otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we expect to use the net proceeds from the sale of our securities for general corporate purposes including, but not limited to, acquisitions, repayment or refinancing of indebtedness, working capital or capital expenditures. Additional information on the use of net proceeds from the sale of securities offered by this prospectus may be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to such offering. In the case of a sale by a selling securityholder, we will not receive any of the proceeds from such sale.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES

Overview

We may offer from time to time under this prospectus various series of debt securities, which may be senior or subordinated, which may include subsidiary guarantees of debt securities, shares of our common stock, Class A common stock and preferred stock, and warrants to purchase any of such securities at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of offering. In addition, certain selling securityholders to be identified in a prospectus supplement may offer and sell shares of Class A common stock and shares of common stock from time to time, in amounts, at prices and on terms that will be determined at the time these securities are offered.

This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we or any selling securityholder may offer. Each time we or any selling securityholder sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement to be attached to the front of this prospectus will describe the specific amounts, prices and other important terms of the securities that we or any selling securityholder offer. The prospectus supplement may also add to or change information contained in this prospectus. If so, the prospectus supplement should be read as superseding this prospectus. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus together with additional information described under the headings *Where You Can Find More Information* and *Certain Documents Incorporated by Reference*. For more details on the terms of the securities, you should also read the exhibits filed with our registration statement, of which this prospectus is a part.

This prospectus may not be used to offer or sell any securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

General

We may issue debt securities from time to time in one or more distinct series, including senior debt securities and subordinated debt securities. This section summarizes the material terms of our senior and subordinated debt securities that are common to all series of such debt securities. Most of the financial and other terms of any series of debt securities that we offer will be described in the prospectus supplement to be attached to the front of this prospectus. The senior debt securities, including any senior subordinated securities, will be issued under an indenture dated as of March 8, 2010, between us and Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, as trustee. The subordinated debt securities, other than senior subordinated securities, will be issued under an indenture between us and a bank or trust company which will be identified in a prospectus supplement, as trustee. The indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities will be, subject to and governed by the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, or the Trust Indenture Act.

Senior and Subordinated Debt Securities

This section is a summary of the material terms of the indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities and does not describe every aspect of the debt securities that may be issued under these indentures. We urge you to read the indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities, because they, and not this description, define your rights as a holder of these debt securities. Some of the definitions are repeated in this section, but for the rest you will need to read the indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities. We have filed the forms of the indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities as exhibits to a registration statement that we have filed with the SEC, of which this prospectus is a part. See *Where You Can Find More Information* and *Certain Documents Incorporated by Reference*, for information on how to obtain copies of the indentures.

We can issue an unlimited amount of debt securities under the indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities. However, certain of our existing or future debt agreements may limit the amount of senior and

Table of Contents

subordinated debt securities we may issue. We can issue senior and subordinated debt securities from time to time and in one or more series as determined by us. In addition, we can issue senior and subordinated debt securities of any series with terms different from the terms of senior and subordinated debt securities of any other series and the terms of particular senior and subordinated debt securities within any series may differ from each other, all without the consent of the holders of previously issued series of senior and subordinated debt securities. The senior and subordinated debt securities will be unsecured obligations of our company.

Because we may issue both senior debt securities and subordinated debt securities, our references in this section to the debt securities are to each of the senior and subordinated debt securities and our references to the indenture are to each of the indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities, unless the context requires otherwise. In this section, we refer to these senior and subordinated debt securities collectively as the debt securities and we refer to the indentures for the senior and subordinated debt securities collectively as the indentures.

The applicable prospectus supplement for a series of debt securities we issue will describe, among other things, the following terms of the offered debt securities:

The title of the debt securities and whether the debt securities will be senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities.

The aggregate principal amount of the debt securities, the percentage of their principal amount at which the debt securities will be issued and the date or dates when the principal of the debt securities will be payable or how those dates will be determined.

The interest rate or rates, which may be fixed or variable, that the debt securities will bear, if any, and how the rate or rates will be determined.

The date or dates from which any interest will accrue or how the date or dates will be determined, the date or dates on which any interest will be payable, any regular record dates for these payments or how these dates will be determined and the basis on which any interest will be calculated, if other than on the basis of a 360-day year of twelve 30-day months.

The place or places of payment, transfer, conversion and exchange of the debt securities and where notices or demands to or upon us in respect of the debt securities may be served.

Provisions relating to subsidiary guarantees, if any.

Any optional redemption provisions.

Any sinking fund or other provisions that would obligate us to repurchase or redeem the debt securities.

Whether the amount of payments of principal of, or premium, if any, or interest on the debt securities will be determined with reference to an index, formula or other method, which could be based on one or more commodities, equity indices or other indices, and how these amounts will be determined.

Any changes or additions to the events of default under the applicable indenture or our covenants, including additions of any restrictive covenants, with respect to the debt securities.

If not the principal amount of the debt securities, the portion of the principal amount that will be payable upon acceleration of the maturity of the debt securities or how that portion will be determined.

Any changes or additions to the provisions concerning legal defeasance and covenant defeasance contained in the indentures that will be applicable to the debt securities.

Any provisions granting special rights to the holders of the debt securities upon the occurrence of specified events.

If other than the trustee, the name of any paying agent, security registrar and transfer agent for the debt securities.

Table of Contents

If the debt securities are not to be issued in book-entry form only and held by the Depository Trust Company, or DTC, as depository, the form of such debt securities, including whether such debt securities are to be issuable in permanent or temporary global form, as registered securities, bearer securities or both, any restrictions on the offer, sale or delivery of bearer securities and the terms, if any, upon which bearer securities of the series may be exchanged for registered securities of the series and vice versa, if permitted by applicable law and regulations.

If other than U.S. dollars, the currency or currencies of such debt securities.

The person to whom any interest in a debt security will be payable, if other than the registered holder at the close of business on the regular record date.

The denomination or denominations that the debt securities will be issued, if other than denominations of \$2,000 or any integral multiples of \$1,000 in excess thereof in the case of the registered securities and \$5,000 or any integral multiples in the case of the bearer securities.

Whether such debt securities will be convertible into or exchangeable for any other securities and, if so, the terms and conditions upon which such debt securities will be so convertible or exchangeable.

A discussion of federal income tax, accounting and other special considerations, procedures and limitations with respect to the debt securities.

Whether and under what circumstances we will pay additional amounts to holders in respect of any tax assessment or government charge and, if so, whether we will have the option to redeem the debt securities rather than pay such additional amounts.

The subordination, if any, of the debt securities of the series pursuant to the indentures and any changes or additions to the provisions of the indentures relating to subordination.

Any other terms of the debt securities that are consistent with the provisions of the indentures.

For purposes of this prospectus, any reference to the payment of principal of, any premium on, or any interest on, debt securities will include additional amounts if required by the terms of such debt securities.

The indentures do not limit the amount of debt securities that we are authorized to issue from time to time. The indentures also provide that there may be more than one trustee thereunder, each for one or more series of debt securities. At a time when two or more trustees are acting under the applicable indenture, each with respect to only certain series, the term "debt securities" means the series of debt securities for which each respective trustee is acting. If there is more than one trustee under the applicable indenture, the powers and trust obligations of each trustee will apply only to the debt securities for which it is trustee. If two or more trustees are acting under the applicable indenture, then the debt securities for which each trustee is acting would be treated as if issued under separate

indentures.

We may issue debt securities with terms different from those of debt securities that may already have been issued. Without the consent of the holders thereof, we may reopen a previous issue of a series of debt securities and issue additional debt securities of that series unless the reopening was restricted when that series was created.

There is no requirement that we issue debt securities in the future under any indenture, and we may use other indentures or documentation, containing different provisions in connection with future issues of other debt securities.

We may issue the debt securities as original issue discount securities, which are debt securities, including any zero-coupon debt securities, that are issued and sold at a discount from their stated principal amount and provide that, upon acceleration of their maturity, an amount less than their principal amount will become due and payable. We will describe the U.S. federal income tax consequences and other considerations applicable to original issue discount securities in any prospectus supplement relating to them.

Table of Contents

Conversion and Exchange

If any debt securities are convertible into or exchangeable for other securities, the prospectus supplement will explain the terms and conditions of such conversion or exchange, including:

the conversion price or exchange ratio, or the calculation method for such price or ratio;

the conversion or exchange period, or how such period will be determined;

if conversion or exchange will be mandatory or at our option or at the option of the holder;

any requirements with respect to the reservation of shares of securities for purposes of conversion;

provisions for adjustment of the conversion price or the exchange ratio; and

provisions affecting conversion or exchange in the event of the redemption of the debt securities.

Such terms may also include provisions under which the number or amount of other securities to be received by the holders of such debt securities upon conversion or exchange would be calculated according to the market price of such other securities as of a time stated in the prospectus supplement.

Form, Exchange and Transfer

The debt securities will be issued:

as registered securities; or

if so provided in the prospectus supplement, as bearer securities (unless otherwise stated in the prospectus supplement, with interest coupons attached); or

in global form, see [Legal Ownership of Securities](#) [Global Securities](#) ; or

in denominations that are even multiples of \$2,000 or any integral multiple of \$1,000 in excess thereof, in the case of registered securities, and in even multiples of \$5,000, in the case of bearer securities, unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement.

You may have your registered securities divided into registered securities of smaller denominations or combined into registered securities of larger denominations, as long as the aggregate principal amount is not changed. This is called

an exchange.

You may exchange or transfer registered securities of a series at the office of the trustee described in the debt securities. The trustee maintains the list of registered holders and acts as our securities registrar for registering debt securities in the names of holders and transferring debt securities. However, we may appoint another trustee to act as our securities registrar or we may act as our own securities registrar. If we designate additional securities registrars, they will be named in the prospectus supplement. We may cancel the designation of any particular securities registrar. We may also approve a change in the office through which any securities registrar acts. If provided in the prospectus supplement, you may exchange your bearer securities for registered securities of the same series so long as the total principal amount is not changed. Unless otherwise specified in the prospectus supplement, bearer securities will not be issued in exchange for registered securities.

You will not be required to pay a service charge to transfer or exchange debt securities, but you may in certain circumstances be required to pay for any tax or other governmental charge associated with the exchange or transfer. The transfer or exchange will only be made if the transfer agent is satisfied with your proof of ownership and/or transfer documentation.

If the debt securities are redeemable and we redeem less than all of the debt securities of a particular series, we may block the transfer or exchange of debt securities for 15 days before the day we mail the notice of redemption or publish such notice (in the case of bearer securities) and ending on the day of that mailing or publication in order to freeze the list of holders to prepare the mailing. At our option, we may mail or publish

Table of Contents

such notice of redemption through an electronic medium. We may also refuse to register transfers or exchanges of debt securities selected for redemption, except that we will continue to permit transfers and exchanges of the unredeemed portion of any debt security being partially redeemed.

Paying and Paying Agents

If you are a holder of registered securities, we will pay interest to you if you are a direct holder in the list of registered holders at the close of business on a particular day in advance of each due date for interest, even if you no longer own the security on the interest due date. That particular time and day, usually about two weeks in advance of the interest due date, is called the Regular Record Date and is stated in the prospectus supplement. Holders buying and selling debt securities must work out between them how to compensate for the fact that we will pay all the interest for an interest period to the one who is the registered holder on the Regular Record Date. The most common manner is to adjust the sales price of the debt securities to prorate interest fairly between buyer and seller. This prorated interest amount is called accrued interest.

With respect to registered securities, we will pay interest, principal and any other money due on the debt securities at the place and time described in the debt securities. You must make arrangements to have your payments picked up at or wired from that place. We may also choose to pay interest by mailing checks or making wire transfers.

Street name and other indirect holders should consult their banks or brokers for information on how they will receive payments.

If bearer securities are issued, unless otherwise provided in the prospectus supplement, we will maintain an office or agency outside the United States for the payment of all amounts due on the bearer securities. If debt securities are listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange or any other stock exchange located outside the United States, we will maintain an office or agency for such debt securities in any city located outside the United States required by such stock exchange. The initial locations of such offices and agencies will be specified in the prospectus supplement. Unless otherwise provided in the prospectus supplement, payment of interest on any bearer securities on or before maturity will be made only against surrender of coupons for such interest installments as they mature. Unless otherwise provided in the prospectus supplement, no payment with respect to any bearer security will be made at any office or agency of our company in the United States or by check mailed to any address in the United States or by transfer to an account maintained with a bank located in the United States. Notwithstanding the foregoing, payments of principal, premium and interest, if any, on bearer securities payable in U.S. dollars may be made, at the office of our paying agent described in a prospectus supplement, but only if payment of the full amount in U.S. dollars at all offices or agencies outside the United States is illegal or effectively precluded by exchange controls or other similar restrictions.

Regardless of who acts as the paying agent, all money paid by us to a paying agent that remains unclaimed at the end of two years after the amount is due to registered holders will be repaid to us. After that two-year period, you may look only to us for payment and not to the trustee, any other paying agent or anyone else.

We may also arrange for additional payment offices, and may cancel or change these offices, including our use of the trustee's corporate trust office. We may also choose to act as our own paying agent. We must notify you of changes in identities of the paying agents for any particular series of debt securities.

Notices

With respect to registered securities, Central and the trustee will send notices regarding the debt securities only to registered holders, using their addresses as listed in the list of registered holders. With respect to bearer securities, Central and the trustee will give notice by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the City of New York or in such other cities that may be specified in a prospectus supplement. At our option, we may send or publish notices through an electronic medium as specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, including in accordance with the applicable procedures of DTC.

Table of Contents

Events of Default

You will have special rights if an event of default occurs in respect of the debt securities of your series and is not cured, as described later in this subsection.

The term "event of default" in respect of the debt securities of your series means any of the following:

We do not pay the principal of, or any premium on, a debt security of such series on its due date.

We do not pay interest on a debt security of such series within 30 days of its due date whether at maturity, upon redemption or upon acceleration.

We do not deposit any sinking fund payment in respect of debt securities of such series on its due date.

We remain in breach of a covenant in respect of debt securities of such series for 60 days after we receive a written notice of default stating we are in breach and requiring that we remedy the breach. The notice must be sent by either the trustee or holders of not less than 25% of the outstanding principal amount of debt securities of such series.

We file for bankruptcy or certain other events in bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occur.

Any other event of default in respect of debt securities of such series described in the prospectus supplement occurs.

The events of default described above may be added to or modified as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. An event of default for a particular series of debt securities does not necessarily constitute an event of default for any other series of debt securities issued under an indenture. The trustee may withhold notice to the holders of debt securities of any default (except in the payment of principal or interest) if it considers such withholding of notice to be in the best interests of the holders.

Remedies if an Event of Default Occurs. If an event of default has occurred and has not been cured with respect to one or more series of debt securities, the trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in outstanding principal amount of the debt securities of the affected series may declare the entire principal amount of all the debt securities of that series to be due and immediately payable plus accrued and unpaid interest (Only a portion of the principal is payable if the securities were issued at a discount). This is called a declaration of acceleration of maturity. If an event of default occurs because of certain events in bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, the principal amount of all the debt securities of that series plus accrued and unpaid interest will be automatically accelerated without any action by the trustee or any holder. If there are certain events of default on senior debt, then there are special rules and terms affecting the payments of principal, premiums, and interest on subordinated debt securities. A declaration of acceleration of maturity may be cancelled by the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the debt securities of the affected series if (1) we have paid or deposited with the trustee a sum sufficient in cash to pay all principal, interest and additional amounts, if any, which have become due other than by the declaration of acceleration

of maturity, (2) all existing events of default, other than the nonpayment of principal of or premium or interest, if any, on the debt securities of such series which have become due solely because of the acceleration, have been cured or waived and (3) the rescission would not conflict with any judgment or decree of a court of competent jurisdiction.

If we do not pay the principal of, or any premium on, a debt security of your series on its due date or we do not pay interest on your series when due (and have not paid interest for 30 days), we will pay to the Trustee (when requested) the whole amount of principal, premium (if any), and interest with additional interest on any overdue principal, premium, and interest and other fees related to the Trustee's collections efforts. If we do not comply with the Trustee's request, the Trustee may sue us and collect on these amounts.

Except in cases of default, where the trustee has some special duties, the trustee is not required to take any action under the indentures at the request of the holders unless the holders offer the trustee reasonable protection from expenses and liability, called an indemnity. If reasonable indemnity is provided, the holders of a majority

Table of Contents

in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the relevant series may direct the time, method and place of conducting any lawsuit or other formal legal action seeking any remedy available to the trustee. The trustee may refuse to follow those directions in certain circumstances. No delay or omission in exercising any right or remedy accruing upon any event of default will be treated as a waiver of such right, remedy or event of default.

Before you are allowed to bypass the trustee and bring your own lawsuit or other formal legal action or take other steps to enforce your rights or protect your interests relating to the debt securities, the following must occur:

You must give the trustee written notice that an event of default has occurred and remains uncured.

The holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of all outstanding debt securities of the relevant series must make a written request that the trustee take action because of the default and must offer reasonable indemnity to the trustee against the cost and other liabilities of taking that action.

The trustee must not have taken action for 60 days after receipt of the above notice and offer of indemnity.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the debt securities must not have given the trustee a direction inconsistent with the above notice during the 60-day period.

However, notwithstanding the conditions described above, you are entitled at any time to sue for the payment of money due on your debt securities (including, but not limited to, principal, premium, interest, or any additional amounts) after the due date.

Holders of a majority in principal amount of the debt securities of the affected series may waive (on behalf of all holders) any past defaults other than (1) the payment of principal, any premium or interest or (2) in respect of a covenant or other provision that cannot be modified or amended without the consent of each holder.

Street name and other indirect holders should consult their banks or brokers for information on how to give notice or direction or to make a request of the trustee and to make or cancel a declaration of acceleration.

Each year, we will furnish to the trustee a written statement of certain of our officers certifying that to their knowledge we are in compliance with the indentures and the debt securities, or else specifying any default.

Merger or Consolidation

Under the terms of the indentures, we are generally permitted to consolidate or merge with another entity. We are also permitted to sell all or substantially all of our assets to another entity. However, we may not take any of these actions unless all the following conditions are met:

either we will be the surviving corporation or, if we merge out of existence or sell assets, the entity into which we merge or to which we sell assets must agree to be legally responsible for the debt securities;

immediately after the merger or transfer of assets, no default on the debt securities can exist. A default for this purpose includes any event that would be an event of default if the requirements for giving a default notice or of having the default exist for a specific period of time were disregarded;

we must deliver certain certificates and documents to the trustee; and

we must satisfy any other requirements specified in the prospectus supplement.

Modification or Waiver

There are three types of changes we can make to the indentures and the debt securities.

Changes Requiring Approval of Each Holder. First, there are changes that cannot be made to your debt securities without the approval of each holder. Following is a list of those types of changes:

changing the stated maturity of the principal of or interest on a debt security;

Table of Contents

reducing any amounts due on a debt security or payable upon acceleration of the maturity of a security following a default;

adversely affecting any right of repayment at the holder's option;

changing the place (except as otherwise described in this prospectus) or currency of payment on a debt security;

impairing your right to sue for payment or to convert or exchange a security;

in the case of subordinated debt securities, modifying the subordination provisions in a manner that is adverse to holders of the subordinated debt securities;

in the case of senior debt securities, modifying the securities to subordinate the securities to other indebtedness;

reducing the percentage of holders of debt securities whose consent is needed to modify or amend the indentures;

reducing the percentage of holders of debt securities whose consent is needed to waive compliance with certain provisions of the indentures or to waive certain defaults;

reducing the requirements for quorum or voting with respect to the debt securities;

modifying any other aspect of the provisions of the indentures dealing with modification and waiver except to increase the voting requirements;

changing our obligations to pay additional amounts which are required to be paid to holders with respect to taxes imposed on such holders in certain circumstances; and

other provisions specified in the prospectus supplement.

Changes Requiring a Majority Vote. The second type of change to the indentures and the outstanding debt securities is the kind that requires a vote in favor by holders of outstanding debt securities owning a majority of the principal amount of the particular series affected. Separate votes will be needed for each series even if they are affected in the same way. Most changes fall into this category, except for clarifying changes and certain other changes that would not adversely affect holders of the outstanding debt securities in any material respect. The same vote would be required for us to obtain a waiver of all or part of certain covenants in the applicable indenture, or a waiver of a past default.

However, we cannot obtain a waiver of a payment default or any other aspect of the indentures or the outstanding debt securities listed in the first category described previously under **Senior and Subordinated Debt Securities Modification or Waiver Changes Requiring Approval of Each Holder** unless we obtain your individual consent to the waiver.

Changes Not Requiring Approval. The third type of change does not require any vote by holders of outstanding debt securities. This type is limited to clarifications; curing ambiguities, defects or inconsistencies and certain other changes that would not adversely affect holders of the outstanding debt securities in any material respect. Qualifying or maintaining the qualification of the indentures under the Trust Indenture Act does not require any vote by holders of debt securities.

Further Details Concerning Voting. When taking a vote, we will use the following rules to decide how much principal amount to attribute to a debt security:

for original issue discount securities, we will use the principal amount that would be due and payable on the voting date if the maturity of the debt securities were accelerated to that date because of a default; and

for debt securities whose principal amount is not known (for example, because it is based on an index), we will use a special rule for that debt security described in the prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

Debt securities will not be considered outstanding, and therefore not eligible to vote, if we have deposited or set aside in trust for you money for their payment or redemption. Debt securities will also not be eligible to vote if they have been fully defeased as described below under Senior and Subordinated Debt Securities Defeasance Full Defeasance.

We will generally be entitled to set any day as a record date for the purpose of determining the holders of outstanding indenture securities that are entitled to vote or take other action under the indentures.

We are not required to set a record date. If we set a record date for a vote or other action to be taken by holders of a particular series, that vote or action may be taken only by persons who are holders of outstanding securities of that series on the record date and must be taken within 180 days following the record date or another period that we may specify. We may shorten or lengthen this period from time to time.

Street name and other indirect holders should consult their banks or brokers for information on how approval may be granted or denied if we seek to change the indentures or the debt securities or request a waiver.

Satisfaction and Discharge

The indentures will cease to be of further effect, and we will be deemed to have satisfied and discharged the indentures with respect to a particular series of debt securities, when

(1) either:

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

all debt securities of that series not previously delivered to the trustee for cancellation have become due and payable or will become due and payable at their stated maturity or on a redemption date within one year; we deposit with the trustee, in trust, funds sufficient to pay the entire indebtedness on the debt securities of that series that had not been previously delivered for cancellation, for the principal and interest to the date of the deposit (for debt securities that have become due and payable) or to the stated maturity or the redemption date, as the case may be (for debt securities that have not become due and payable); and

(2) the following conditions have been satisfied:

we have paid or caused to be paid all other sums payable under the indentures in respect of that series; and

we have delivered to the trustee an officer's certificate and opinion of counsel, each stating that all these conditions have been complied with.

Defeasance

The following discussion of full defeasance and covenant defeasance will be applicable to your series of debt securities only if we choose to have them apply to that series. If we choose to do so, we will state that in the applicable

prospectus supplement and describe any changes to these provisions.

Full Defeasance. If there is a change in federal tax law, as described below, we can legally release ourselves from any payment or other obligations on the debt securities, called full defeasance, if we put in place the following other arrangements for you to be repaid:

We must deposit in trust for your benefit and the benefit of all other registered holders of the debt securities a combination of money and U.S. government or U.S. government agency notes or bonds that will generate enough cash to make interest, principal and any other payments on the debt securities on their various due dates including, possibly, their earliest redemption date.

Table of Contents

Under current federal tax law, the deposit and our legal release from the debt securities would likely be treated as though you surrendered your debt securities in exchange for your share of the cash and notes or bonds deposited in trust. In that event, you could recognize income, gain or loss on the debt securities you surrendered. In order for us to effect a full defeasance we must deliver to the trustee a legal opinion confirming that you will not recognize income, gain or loss for federal income tax purposes as a result of the defeasance and that you will not be taxed on the debt securities any differently than if we did not make the deposit and just repaid the debt securities ourselves.

We must comply with any additional provisions set forth in the prospectus supplement. If we accomplish a full defeasance as described above, you would have to rely solely on the trust deposit for repayment on the debt securities. You could not look to us for repayment in the unlikely event of any shortfall. Conversely, the trust deposit would most likely be protected from claims of our lenders and other creditors if we ever become bankrupt or insolvent. You would also be released from any applicable subordination provisions on the subordinated debt securities described below under **Senior and Subordinated Debt Securities Subordination**.

Covenant Defeasance. Under current federal tax law, we can make the same type of deposit described above and be released from the restrictive covenants in the debt securities, if any. This is called **covenant defeasance**. In that event, you would lose the protection of those restrictive covenants but would gain the protection of having money and securities set aside in trust to repay the debt securities, and you would be released from any applicable subordination provisions on the subordinated debt securities described below under **Senior and Subordinated Debt Securities Subordination**. In order to achieve covenant defeasance, we must do the following:

We must deposit in trust for your benefit and the benefit of all other registered holders of the debt securities a combination of money and U.S. government or U.S. government agency notes or bonds that will generate enough cash to make interest, principal and any other payments on the debt securities on their various due dates.

We must deliver to the trustee a legal opinion confirming that you will not recognize income, gain or loss for federal income tax purposes as a result of the covenant defeasance and that you will not be taxed on the debt securities any differently than if such covenant defeasance had not occurred.

We must comply with any additional provisions set forth in the prospectus supplement. If we accomplish covenant defeasance, the following provisions of the indentures and the debt securities would no longer apply unless otherwise specified:

our promises regarding conduct of our business and other matters and any other covenants applicable to the series of debt securities that will be described in the prospectus supplement; and

the definition of an event of default as a breach of such covenants that may be specified in the prospectus supplement.

If we accomplish covenant defeasance, you can still look to us for repayment of the debt securities if there were a shortfall in the trust deposit. In fact, if one of the remaining events of default occurs (such as our bankruptcy) and the debt securities become immediately due and payable, there may be such a shortfall. Depending on the event causing the default, of course, you may not be able to obtain payment of the shortfall.

In order to exercise either full defeasance or covenant defeasance, we must comply with certain conditions, and no event or condition can exist that would prevent us from making payments of principal, premium, and interest, if any, on the debt securities of such series on the date the irrevocable deposit is made or at any time during the period ending on the 91st day after the deposit date.

Table of Contents

Ranking

Unless provided otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the debt securities are not secured by any of our property or assets. Accordingly, your ownership of debt securities means you are one of our unsecured creditors. The senior debt securities are not subordinated to any of our other debt obligations and, therefore, they rank equally with all our other unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness. The subordinated debt securities will rank junior to our Senior Indebtedness (as such term is defined in the subordinated indenture) and equally with all our other unsecured and subordinated debt. See Senior and Subordinated Debt Securities Subordination.

Subordination

Unless the prospectus supplement provides otherwise, the following provisions will apply to the subordinated debt securities:

The payment of principal, any premium and interest on the subordinated debt securities is subordinated in right of payment to the prior payment in full of all of our senior indebtedness. This means that in certain circumstances where we may not be making payments on all of our debt obligations as they become due, the holders of all of our senior indebtedness will be entitled to receive payment in full of all amounts that are due or will become due on the senior indebtedness before you and the other holders of subordinated debt securities will be entitled to receive any payment or distribution (other than in the form of subordinated securities) on the subordinated debt securities. These circumstances may include the following:

We make a payment or distribute assets to creditors upon any liquidation, dissolution, winding up or reorganization of our company, or as part of an assignment or marshalling of our assets for the benefit of our creditors.

We file for bankruptcy or certain other events in bankruptcy, insolvency or similar proceedings occur.

The maturity of the subordinated debt securities is accelerated. For example, the entire principal amount of a series of subordinated debt securities may be declared to be due and payable and immediately payable or may be automatically accelerated due to an event of default as described under Senior and Subordinated Debt Securities Events of Default.

In addition, in general, we will not be permitted to make payments of principal, any premium or interest on the subordinated debt securities if we default in our obligation to make payments on our senior indebtedness and do not cure such default. We are also prohibited from making payments on subordinated debt securities if an event of default (other than a payment default) that permits the holders of senior indebtedness to accelerate the maturity of the senior indebtedness occurs and Central and the trustee have received a notice of such event of default. However, unless the senior indebtedness has been accelerated because of that event of default, this payment blockage notice cannot last more than 179 days.

These subordination provisions mean that if we are insolvent, a holder of senior indebtedness is likely to ultimately receive out of our assets more than a holder of the same amount of our subordinated debt securities, and a creditor of our company that is owed a specific amount but who owns neither our senior indebtedness nor our subordinated debt securities may ultimately receive less than a holder of the same amount of senior indebtedness and more than a holder

of subordinated debt securities.

The subordinated indenture does not limit the amount of senior indebtedness we are permitted to have, and we may in the future incur additional senior indebtedness.

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

Table of Contents

Guarantees

A series of debt securities may be guaranteed by some of our subsidiaries, if those guarantees are provided for in the supplemental indenture relating to that series of debt securities. If guarantees are issued in connection with any debt securities, the terms of those guarantees and the names of our subsidiaries which are providing the guarantees will be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement.

The Trustee

Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, is the trustee under the indenture governing the senior debt securities, including senior subordinated securities. The initial trustee under the indenture under which the subordinate debt securities, other than senior subordinated securities, will be issued will be identified in a prospectus supplement. Under each indenture, the trustee will also be the initial paying agent and registrar for the debt securities.

The indentures provide that, except during the continuance of an event of default under the indentures, the trustee under the indentures will perform only such duties as are specifically set forth in the indentures. Under the indentures, the holders of a majority in outstanding principal amount of the debt securities will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding or exercising any remedy available to the trustee under the indentures, subject to certain exceptions. If an event of default has occurred and is continuing, the trustee under the indentures will exercise such rights and powers vested in it under the indentures and use the same degree of care and skill in its exercise as a prudent person would exercise under the circumstances in the conduct of such person's own affairs.

The indentures and provisions of the Trust Indenture Act, incorporated by reference in the indentures contain limitations on the rights of the trustee under such indentures, should it become a creditor of our company, to obtain payment of claims in certain cases or to realize on certain property received by it in respect of any such claims, as security or otherwise. The trustee under the indentures is permitted to engage in other transactions. However, if the trustee under the indentures acquires any prohibited conflicting interest, it must eliminate the conflict or resign.

The trustee may resign or be removed with respect to one or more series of debt securities and a successor trustee may be appointed to act with respect to such series. In the event that two or more persons are acting as trustee with respect to different series of debt securities under the indentures, each such trustee shall be a trustee of a trust separate and apart from the trust administered by any other such trustee and any action described herein to be taken by the trustee may then be taken by each such trustee with respect to, and only with respect to, the one or more series of debt securities for which it is trustee.

In the event that an entity is the trustee under both the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture, and a conflict of interest arises as a result, the trustee must resign as trustee under (1) either of the indentures or (2), if this does not eliminate the conflict of interest, both the indentures.

Legal Ownership of Securities

Holders of Securities

Book-Entry Holders. We will issue debt securities in book-entry form only, unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement. If securities are issued in book-entry form, this means the securities will be represented by one or more global securities registered in the name of a financial institution that holds them as depositary on behalf of other financial institutions that participate in the depositary's book-entry system. These participating institutions, in turn, hold beneficial interests in the securities on behalf of themselves or their customers.

We will only recognize the person in whose name a security is registered as the holder of that security. Consequently, for securities issued in global form, we will recognize only the depositary as the holder of the securities and all payments on the securities will be made to the depositary. The depositary passes along the

Table of Contents

payments it receives to its participants, which in turn pass the payments along to their customers who are the beneficial owners. The depositary and its participants do so under agreements they have made with one another or with their customers; they are not obligated to do so under the terms of the securities.

As a result, investors in securities issued in book-entry form will not own securities directly. Instead, they will own beneficial interests in a global security, through a bank, broker or other financial institution that participates in the depositary's book-entry system or holds an interest through a participant. As long as the securities are issued in global form, investors will be indirect holders, and not holders, of the securities.

Street Name Holders. In the future, we may terminate a global security or issue securities initially in non-global form. In these cases, investors may choose to hold their securities in their own names or in street name. Securities held by an investor in street name would be registered in the name of a bank, broker or other financial institution that the investor chooses, and the investor would hold only a beneficial interest in those securities through an account he or she maintains at that institution.

For securities held in street name, we will recognize only the intermediary banks, brokers and other financial institutions in whose names the securities are registered as the holders of those securities and all payments on those securities will be made to them. These institutions pass along the payments they receive to their customers who are the beneficial owners, but only because they agree to do so in their customer agreements or because they are legally required to do so. Investors who hold securities in street name will be indirect holders, not holders, of those securities.

Legal Holders. We, and any third parties employed by us or acting on your behalf, such as trustees, depositories and transfer agents, are obligated only to the legal holders of the securities. We do not have obligations to investors who hold beneficial interests in global securities, in street name or by any other indirect means. This will be the case whether an investor chooses to be an indirect holder of a security or has no choice because we are issuing the securities only in global form.

For example, once we make a payment or give a notice to the legal holder, we have no further responsibility for the payment or notice even if that legal holder is required, under agreements with depositary participants or customers or by law, to pass it along to the indirect holders but does not do so. Similarly, if we want to obtain the approval of the holders for any purpose (for example, to amend an indenture or to relieve ourselves of the consequences of a default or of our obligation to comply with a particular provision of the indenture), we would seek the approval only from the legal holders, and not the indirect holders, of the securities. Whether and how the legal holders contact the indirect holders is up to the legal holders.

When we refer to you, we mean those who invest in the securities being offered by this prospectus, whether they are the legal holders or only indirect holders of those securities. When we refer to your securities, we mean the securities in which you hold a direct or indirect interest.

Special Considerations for Indirect Holders. If you hold securities through a bank, broker or other financial institution, either in book-entry form or in street name, you should check with your own institution to find out:

how it handles securities payments and notices;

whether it imposes fees or charges;

how it would handle a request for the holders' consent, if ever required;

whether and how you can instruct it to send you securities registered in your own name so you can be a legal holder, if that is permitted in the future;

how it would exercise rights under the securities if there were a default or other event triggering the need for holders to act to protect their interests; and

if the securities are in book-entry form, how the depository's rules and procedures will affect these matters.

Table of Contents

Global Securities

A global security represents one or any other number of individual securities. Generally, all securities represented by the same global securities will have the same terms. We may, however, issue a global security that represents multiple securities that have different terms and are issued at different times. We call this kind of global security a master global security.

Each security issued in book-entry form will be represented by a global security that we deposit with and register in the name of a financial institution that we select or its nominee. The financial institution that is selected for this purpose is called the depository. Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, The Depository Trust Company, New York, New York, known as the DTC, will be the depository for all securities issued in book-entry form.

A global security may not be transferred to or registered in the name of anyone other than the depository or its nominee, unless special termination situations arise or as otherwise described in the prospectus supplement. We describe those situations below under *Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated*. As a result of these arrangements, the depository, or its nominee, will be the sole registered owner and holder of all securities represented by a global security, and investors will be permitted to own only beneficial interests in a global security. Beneficial interests must be held by means of an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that in turn has an account with the depository or with another institution that does. Thus, an investor whose security is represented by a global security will not be a holder of the security, but only an indirect holder of a beneficial interest in the global security.

Special Considerations for Global Securities. As an indirect holder, an investor's rights relating to a global security will be governed by the account rules of the investor's financial institution and of the depository, as well as general laws relating to securities transfers. We do not recognize this type of investor as a holder of securities and instead will deal only with the depository that holds the global security.

If securities are issued only in the form of a global security, an investor should be aware of the following:

An investor cannot cause the securities to be registered in his or her name and cannot obtain physical certificates for his or her interest in the securities, except in the special situations we describe below.

An investor will be an indirect holder and must look to his or her own bank or broker for payments on the securities and protection of his or her legal rights relating to the securities, as we describe under *Legal Ownership of Securities* *Holders of Securities* above.

An investor may not be able to sell interests in the securities to some insurance companies and to other institutions that are required by law to own their securities in non-book-entry form.

An investor may not be able to pledge his or her interest in a global security in circumstances where certificates representing the securities must be delivered to the lender or other beneficiary of the pledge in order for the pledge to be effective.

The depositary's policies, which may change from time to time, will govern payments, transfers, exchanges and other matters relating to an investor's interest in a global security. Neither we nor any third parties employed by us or acting on your behalf, such as trustees and transfer agents, have any responsibility for any aspect of the depositary's actions or for its records of ownership interests in a global security. Central and the trustee do not supervise the depositary in any way.

The DTC requires that those who purchase and sell interests in a global security within its book-entry system use immediately available funds, and your broker or bank may require you to do so as well.

Financial institutions that participate in the depositary's book-entry system, and through which an investor holds its interest in a global security, may also have their own policies affecting payments, notices and other matters relating to the security. There may be more than one financial intermediary in the chain of ownership for an investor. We do not monitor and are not responsible for the actions of any of those intermediaries.

Table of Contents

Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated. In a few special situations described below, a global security will be terminated and interests in it will be exchanged for certificates in non-global form representing the securities it represented. After that exchange, the choice of whether to hold the securities directly or in street name will be up to the investor. Investors must consult their own banks or brokers to find out how to have their interests in a global security transferred on termination to their own names, so that they will be holders. We have described the rights of holders and street name investors above under **Legal Ownership of Securities** **Holders of Securities**.

The special situations for termination of a global security are as follows:

if the depositary notifies us that it is unwilling, unable or no longer qualified to continue as depositary for that global security and we do not appoint another institution to act as depositary within a specified time period;

if we elect to terminate that global security; or

if an event of default has occurred with regard to securities represented by that global security and it has not been cured or waived.

The prospectus supplement may also list additional situations for terminating a global security that would apply to a particular series of securities covered by the prospectus supplement. If a global security is terminated, only the depositary is responsible for deciding the names of the institutions in whose names the securities represented by the global security will be registered and, therefore, who will be the holders of those securities.

Governing Law

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

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

As of the date of this prospectus, our authorized capital stock consists of 80,000,000 shares of common stock, 100,000,000 shares of Class A common stock, 3,000,000 shares of Class B stock and 1,000,000 shares of preferred stock. At November 17, 2017, there were 12,160,023 shares of common stock, 38,035,517 shares of Class A common stock and 1,652,262 shares of Class B stock, and there were approximately 95 holders of record of our common stock, 315 holders of record of our Class A common stock, and five holders of record of our Class B stock. No shares of preferred stock or options to purchase preferred stock are currently outstanding.

The following description of our capital stock does not purport to be complete and is subject to and is qualified in its entirety by the description of our capital stock contained in our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, a copy of which is filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We recommend you review the exhibit for a detailed description of the provisions that we summarize below.

Common Stock, Class A Common Stock and Class B Stock

Voting, Dividend and Other Rights. The voting powers, preferences and relative rights of the common stock, Class A common stock, and the Class B stock are identical in all respects, except that (i) the holders of common stock are entitled to one vote per share, the holders of Class B stock are entitled to the lesser of ten votes per share or 49% of the total votes cast, and the holders of Class A common stock generally have no voting rights unless otherwise required by Delaware law, as described below; (ii) stock dividends on common stock may be paid only in shares of common stock and stock dividends on Class B stock may be paid only in shares of Class B stock and (iii) shares of Class B stock have certain conversion rights and are subject to certain restrictions on ownership and transfer described below under **Conversion Rights and Restrictions on Transfer of Class B Stock**. Except as described above, issuances of additional shares of Class B stock and modifications of the terms of the Class B stock require the approval of a majority of the holders of the common stock and Class B stock, voting as separate classes. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that the number of authorized shares of Class A common stock may be increased or decreased (but not below the number of outstanding shares of Class A common stock then outstanding) by the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the holders of the common stock and Class B stock, voting together as a single class, without a vote by any holders of Class A common stock. Under the Delaware General Corporation Law, any amendments to the certificate of incorporation altering or changing the powers, preferences, or special rights of the shares of any class so as to adversely affect them, including the Class A common stock, requires the separate approval of the class so affected, as well as the approval of all classes entitled to vote thereon, voting together, and these voting rights are specifically included in our amended and restated certificate of incorporation. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation cannot be modified, revised or amended without the affirmative vote of the majority of outstanding shares of common stock and Class B stock, voting separately as a class. Except as described above or as required by law, holders of common stock and Class B stock vote together on all matters presented to the stockholders for their vote or approval, including the election of directors. The stockholders are not entitled to vote cumulatively for the election of directors.

Each share of common stock, Class A common stock and Class B stock is entitled to receive dividends if, as and when declared by our board of directors out of funds legally available therefor. The common stock, Class A common stock and Class B stock share equally, on a share-for-share basis, in any cash dividends declared by our board of directors.

Stockholders have no preemptive or other rights to subscribe for additional shares. Subject to any rights of holders of any preferred stock, all holders of common stock, Class A common stock and Class B stock, regardless of class, are entitled to share equally on a share-for-share basis in any assets available for distribution to stockholders on liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our company. No common stock, Class A common stock or Class B stock is

subject to redemption or a sinking fund.

Table of Contents

Conversion Rights and Restrictions on Transfer of Class B Stock. Neither the common stock nor the Class A common stock has any conversion rights. However, at the option of the holder, each share of Class B stock is convertible at any time and from time to time into one share of common stock. If at any time the holders of a majority of outstanding shares of Class B stock vote to convert the outstanding shares of Class B stock to common stock, then all outstanding shares of Class B stock shall be deemed automatically converted into shares of common stock.

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that any holder of shares of Class B stock desiring to transfer such shares to a person other than a Permitted Transferee (as defined below) must present such shares to us for conversion into an equal number of shares of common stock upon such transfer. Thereafter, such shares of common stock may be freely transferred to persons other than Permitted Transferees, subject to applicable securities law.

Shares of Class B stock may not be transferred except generally to family members, certain trusts, heirs and devisees (collectively, Permitted Transferees and each, a Permitted Transferee). Upon any sale or transfer of ownership or voting rights to a transferee other than a Permitted Transferee or to the extent an entity no longer remains a Permitted Transferee, such shares of Class B stock will automatically convert into equal number of shares of common stock. Accordingly, no trading market is expected to develop in the Class B stock and the Class B stock will not be listed or traded on any exchange or in any market.

Effects of Disproportionate Voting Rights. The disproportionate voting rights of the common stock, Class A common stock and Class B stock could have an adverse effect on the market price of the common stock and of the Class A common stock. Such disproportionate voting rights may make us a less attractive target for a takeover than we otherwise might be, or render more difficult or discourage a merger proposal, a tender offer or a proxy contest, even if such actions were favored by our stockholders other than the holders of the Class B stock. Accordingly, such disproportionate voting rights may deprive holders of common stock of an opportunity to sell their shares at a premium over prevailing market prices, since takeover bids frequently involve purchases of stock directly from shareholders at such a premium price.

The common stock and Class A common stock issued by this prospectus will, when issued, be fully paid and nonassessable and will not have, or be subject to, any preemptive or similar rights.

Our common stock and Class A common stock are listed on the Nasdaq Stock Market under the symbols CENT and CENTA, respectively. The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is ComputerShare Trust Company, N.A., 250 Royall Street, Canton, MA 02021. Their phone number is (877) 261-9290.

Preferred Stock

Under our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, we may issue up to 1,000,000 shares of preferred stock. We currently have no outstanding shares of preferred stock.

Our board of directors has the authority, without further action by the stockholders, to issue up to the maximum authorized number of shares of preferred stock in one or more series. The board of directors also has the authority to designate the rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions of each such series, including dividend rights, dividend rates, conversion rights, voting rights, terms of redemption, redemption prices, liquidation preferences and the number of shares constituting any series. The rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions of each series will be fixed by the certificate of designation relating to that series. Any or all of the rights of the preferred stock may be greater than the rights of the common stock or the Class A common stock.

The issuance of preferred stock may have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of our company without further action by the stockholders. The issuance of preferred stock with voting and conversion rights may also adversely affect the voting power of the holders of common stock. In certain circumstances, an issuance of preferred stock could have the effect of decreasing the market price of the common stock.

Table of Contents

Whenever preferred stock is to be sold pursuant to this prospectus, we will file a prospectus supplement relating to that sale which will specify:

the number of shares in the series of preferred stock;

the designation for the series of preferred stock by number, letter or title that shall distinguish the series from any other series of preferred stock;

the dividend rate, if any, and whether dividends on that series of preferred stock will be cumulative, noncumulative or partially cumulative;

the voting rights of that series of preferred stock, if any;

any conversion provisions applicable to that series of preferred stock;

any redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to that series of preferred stock;

the liquidation preference per share of that series of preferred stock, if any; and

the terms of any other preferences or rights, if any, applicable to that series of preferred stock.

Certain Effects of Authorized but Unissued Stock

We have shares of common stock, Class A common stock and preferred stock available for future issuance without stockholder approval. These additional shares may be used for a variety of corporate purposes, including future public offerings to raise additional capital, facilitate corporate acquisitions or payable as a dividend on the capital stock.

The existence of unissued and unreserved common stock, Class A common stock and preferred stock may enable our board of directors to issue shares to persons friendly to current management or to issue preferred stock with terms that could render more difficult or discourage an attempt to obtain control of us by means of a merger, tender offer, proxy contest or otherwise, thereby protecting the continuity of our management. In addition, the issuance of preferred stock could adversely affect the voting power of holders of common stock and the likelihood that such holders will receive dividend payments and payments upon liquidation.

Delaware Law and Certain Provisions of Our Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws

Provisions of Delaware law and our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and bylaws could make the acquisition of our company and the removal of incumbent officers and directors more difficult. These provisions are expected to discourage certain types of coercive takeover practices and inadequate takeover bids and to encourage persons seeking to acquire control of our company to negotiate with us first. We believe that the benefits of increased

protection of our potential ability to negotiate with the proponent of an unfriendly or unsolicited proposal to acquire or restructure our company outweigh the disadvantages of discouraging such proposals because, among other things, negotiation of such proposals could result in an improvement of their terms.

We are subject to the provisions of Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law. In general, the statute prohibits a publicly-held Delaware corporation from engaging in a business combination with an interested stockholder for a period of three years after the date that the person became an interested stockholder unless, subject to certain exceptions, the business combination or the transaction in which the person became an interested stockholder is approved in a prescribed manner. Generally, a business combination includes a merger, asset or stock sale, or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to the stockholder. Generally, an interested stockholder is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns, or within three years prior, did own 15% or more of the corporation's voting stock. These provisions may have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of our company without further action by the stockholders.

Table of Contents

Our bylaws provide that stockholder action can be taken at an annual or special meeting of stockholders or by written consent. Our bylaws also provide that special meetings of stockholders can be called by the board of directors, the chairman of the board, if any, the president or at the request of stockholders holding not less than 10% of the total voting power. The business permitted to be conducted at any special meeting of stockholders is limited to the purposes stated in the notice of such meeting. Our bylaws set forth an advance notice procedure with regard to the nomination, other than by or at the direction of the board of directors, of candidates for election as directors and with regard to business to be brought before a meeting of stockholders.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WARRANTS

We may issue warrants, including warrants to purchase common stock, Class A common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, or any combination of the foregoing. Warrants may be issued independently or together with any securities and may be attached to or separate from the securities. The warrants will be issued under warrant agreements to be entered into between us and a warrant agent as detailed in the prospectus supplement relating to warrants being offered. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants and will not have any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any holders or beneficial owners of warrants. A copy of the warrant agreement will be filed with the SEC in connection with any offering of warrants.

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

the title of the warrants;

the aggregate number of the warrants;

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

the currencies in which the price or prices of the warrants may be payable;

the designation, amount and terms of the offered securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants;

the designation and terms of the other offered securities, if any, with which the warrants are issued and the number of the warrants issued with each security;

if applicable, the date on and after which the warrants and the offered securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants will be separately transferable;

the price or prices at which and currency or currencies in which the offered securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants may be purchased;

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

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

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

a discussion of any federal income tax considerations; and

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

Table of Contents

SELLING SECURITYHOLDERS

To the extent this prospectus is used by any selling securityholder to resell Class A common stock, common stock or other securities, information with respect to the selling securityholder and the plan of distribution will be contained in a supplement to this prospectus, in a post-effective amendment or in filings we make with the SEC under the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities:

through underwriters or dealers;

through agents;

in at the market offerings, within the meaning of Rule 415(a)(4) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or Securities Act, to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise;

directly to purchasers;

through any combination of these methods; or

through any other permitted method.

We will describe in a prospectus supplement, the particular terms of the offering of the securities, including the following:

the names of any underwriters;

the purchase price and the proceeds we will receive from the sale;

any underwriting discounts and other items constituting underwriters' compensation;

any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers;

any securities exchanges on which the securities of the series may be listed; and

any other information we think is important.

If we use underwriters in the sale, such underwriters will acquire the securities for their own account. The underwriters may resell the securities 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 by underwriters without a syndicate. The underwriters may change from time to time any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers.

In connection with an underwritten offering, we would execute an underwriting agreement with an underwriter or underwriters. Unless otherwise indicated in the revised prospectus or applicable prospectus supplement, such underwriting agreement would provide that the obligations of the underwriter or underwriters are subject to certain conditions precedent, and that the underwriter or underwriters with respect to a sale of the covered securities will be obligated to purchase all of the covered securities, if any such securities are purchased. We may grant to the underwriter or underwriters an option to purchase additional securities at the public offering price, less any underwriting discount, as may be set forth in the revised prospectus or applicable prospectus supplement. If we grant any such option, the terms of that option will be set forth in the revised prospectus or applicable prospectus supplement. The underwriting agreement may provide for indemnification by us of the underwriters or their controlling persons against any liability arising under the Securities Act, a brief description of which will be set forth in the revised prospectus or applicable prospectus supplement.

We may sell offered securities through agents designated by us. Any agent involved in the offer or sale of the securities for which this prospectus is delivered will be named, and any commission payable by us to that agent will be set forth, in the prospectus supplement. Unless indicated in the prospectus supplement, the agents have agreed to use their reasonable best efforts to solicit purchases for the period of their appointment.

Table of Contents

We also may sell offered securities directly. In this case, no underwriters or agents would be involved. We may change the price of the securities offered from time to time. If we fix a price or price of our securities, the prices may be market prices prevailing at the time of any sale, prices related to market prices, or negotiated prices.

Underwriters, dealers and agents that participate in the distribution of the offered securities may be underwriters as defined in the Securities Act and any discounts or commissions received by them from us and any profit on the resale of the offered securities by them may be treated as underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. We will identify any underwriters or agents, and describe their compensation, in a prospectus supplement.

We may have agreements with the underwriters, dealers and agents to indemnify them against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribute with respect to payments which the underwriters, dealers or agents may be required to make. Underwriters, dealers and agents may engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us or our subsidiaries in the ordinary course of their businesses.

We may authorize agents or underwriters to solicit offers by certain types of institutions to purchase securities from us at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts. These contracts will provide for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The conditions to these contracts and the commission payable for solicitation of such contracts will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

In order to facilitate the offering of the securities, any underwriters or agents, as the case may be, involved in the offering of such securities may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of such securities or any other securities the prices of which may be used to determine payments on such securities. Specifically, the underwriters or agents, as the case may be, may over allot in connection with the offering, creating a short position in such securities for their own account. In addition, to cover over allotments or to stabilize the price of such securities or any such other securities, the underwriters or agents, as the case may be, may bid for, and purchase, such securities or any such other securities in the open market. Finally, in any offering of such securities through a syndicate of underwriters, the underwriting syndicate may reclaim selling concessions allotted to an underwriter or a dealer for distributing such securities in the offering if the syndicate repurchases previously distributed securities in transactions to cover syndicate short positions, in stabilization transaction or otherwise. Any of these activities may stabilize or maintain the market price of the securities above independent market levels. The underwriters or agents, as the case may be, are not required to engage in these activities, and may end any of these activities at any time.

Other than the common stock and the Class A common stock, the securities issued hereunder may be new issues of securities with no established trading market. Any underwriters or agents to or through whom such securities are sold for public offering and sale may make a market in such securities, but such underwriters or agents will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity of the trading market for any such securities.

Sales by Selling Securityholders

Selling securityholders may use this prospectus in connection with the resale of the securities. The applicable prospectus supplement will identify the selling securityholders and the terms of the securities. Selling securityholders may be deemed to be underwriters in connection with the securities they resell and any profits on the sales may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. The selling securityholders will receive all the proceeds from the sale of the securities. We will not receive any proceeds from sales by selling securityholders.

Table of Contents

VALIDITY OF THE SECURITIES

The validity of the securities issued under this registration statement will be passed upon for us by Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, San Francisco, California. If the securities are being distributed in an underwritten offering, certain legal matters will be passed upon for the underwriters by counsel identified in the related prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements incorporated in this prospectus by reference from Central Garden & Pet Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K and the effectiveness of Central Garden & Pet Company's internal control over financial reporting have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their report, which is incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements have been so incorporated in reliance upon the report of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You can read and copy any material we file with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room at:

U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission

100 F Street, NE

Washington, DC 20549

You can also obtain copies of these materials from the public reference room at the SEC at prescribed rates. You can obtain information on the operation of the public reference room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. Our SEC filings are available on the Internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>, which contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC.

You may also obtain information about us at our Internet website at <http://www.central.com>. However, the information on, or accessible through, our website is not part of this prospectus.

CERTAIN DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

In this document, we incorporate by reference the information we file with the SEC, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring to that information. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus, and later filed information with the SEC will update and supersede this information. Notwithstanding this statement, however, you may rely on information that has been filed at the time you made your investment decision. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below:

- (a) our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2017;

- (b) the description of our capital stock in our registration statement on Form 8-A (File No. 000-20242) filed March 31, 1993, as amended by the Fourth Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, attached as Exhibit 3.1 to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2006 (File No. 000-20242); and

- (c) the description of our Class A Common Stock in our registration statement on Form 8-A (File No. 001-33268) filed January 24, 2007.

Table of Contents

We also incorporate by reference all future filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, that are filed (excluding, however, information we furnish to the SEC) by us after the date of this prospectus and prior to the termination of any offering under this registration statement.

You may request a copy of all information that has been incorporated by reference into this prospectus, at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address or phone number:

Central Garden & Pet Company

1340 Treat Blvd., Suite 600

Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Attention: Investor Relations

Telephone: 1-925-948-4000

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

Table of Contents

\$200,000,000

Class A common stock

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

BofA Merrill Lynch

J.P. Morgan

BMO Capital Markets

SunTrust Robinson Humphrey

Barclays

KeyBanc Capital Markets

, 2018