

ARES CAPITAL CORP
Form N-2/A
September 03, 2010

Table of Contents

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 3, 2010

Registration No. 333-165585

U.S. SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM N-2

REGISTRATION STATEMENT

UNDER

THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

✓ **PRE-EFFECTIVE AMENDMENT NO. 1**

o **POST-EFFECTIVE AMENDMENT NO.**

ARES CAPITAL CORPORATION

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Charter)

**280 Park Avenue, 22nd Floor
Building East
New York, New York 10017**

(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

Registrant's Telephone Number, including Area Code: **(212) 750-7300**

**Joshua M. Bloomstein
Ares Capital Corporation
280 Park Avenue, 22nd Floor
Building East
New York, New York 10017
(212) 750-7300**

(Name and Address of Agent for Service)

Copies of information to:

**Monica J. Shilling
Proskauer Rose LLP
2049 Century Park East, 32nd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90067-3206
(310) 557-2900**

Approximate Date of Proposed Public Offering: From time to time after the effective date of this Registration Statement.

If any securities being registered on this form will be offered on a delayed or continuous basis in reliance on Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered in connection with a dividend reinvestment plan, check the following box. ✓

It is proposed that this filing will become effective (check appropriate box):

✓

when declared effective pursuant to section 8(c).

Edgar Filing: ARES CAPITAL CORP - Form N-2/A

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

Title of Securities Being Registered	Amount Being Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(1)	Amount of Registration Fee(2)
Common Stock, \$0.001 par value per share(3)(4)				
Preferred Stock, \$0.001 par value per share(3)				
Subscription Rights(3)				
Warrants(5)				
Debt Securities(6)				
Total			\$1,000,000,000(7)	\$71,300

- (1) Estimated pursuant to Rule 457(o) solely for the purpose of determining the registration fee. The proposed maximum offering price per security will be determined from time to time, by the Registrant in connection with the sale by the Registrant of the securities registered under this registration statement.
- (2) Previously paid.
- (3) Subject to Note 7 below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate number of shares of common stock or preferred stock, or subscription rights to purchase shares of common stock as may be sold, from time to time separately or as units in combination with other securities registered hereunder.
- (4) Includes such indeterminate number of shares of common stock as may, from time to time, be issued upon conversion or exchange of other securities registered hereunder, to the extent any such securities are, by their terms, convertible or exchangeable for common stock.
- (5) Subject to Note 7 below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate number of warrants as may be sold, from time to time separately or as units in combination with other securities registered hereunder, representing rights to purchase common stock, preferred stock or debt securities.
- (6) Subject to Note 7 below, there is being registered hereunder an indeterminate principal amount of debt securities as may be sold, from time to time separately or as units in combination with other securities registered hereunder. If any debt securities are issued at an original issue discount, then the offering price shall be in such greater principal amount as shall result in an aggregate price to investors not to exceed \$1,000,000,000.
- (7) In no event will the aggregate offering price of all securities issued from time to time pursuant to this registration statement exceed \$1,000,000,000.

THE REGISTRANT HEREBY AMENDS THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT ON SUCH DATE OR DATES AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO DELAY ITS EFFECTIVE DATE UNTIL THE REGISTRANT SHALL FILE A FURTHER AMENDMENT WHICH SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL THEREAFTER BECOME EFFECTIVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 8(a) OF THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933, AS AMENDED, OR UNTIL THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE ON SUCH DATE AS THE COMMISSION, ACTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 8(a), MAY DETERMINE.

Table of Contents

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

Subject to Completion, dated September 3, 2010

PROSPECTUS

\$1,000,000,000

**Common Stock
Preferred Stock
Debt Securities
Subscription Rights
Warrants**

Ares Capital Corporation is a specialty finance company that is a closed-end, non-diversified management investment company incorporated in Maryland. We have elected to be regulated as a business development company under the Investment Company Act of 1940. Our investment objective is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through debt and equity investments. We invest primarily in first and second lien senior loans and mezzanine debt, which in some cases includes an equity component. To a lesser extent, we also make equity investments.

We are externally managed by Ares Capital Management LLC, an affiliate of Ares Management LLC, a global alternative asset manager and a Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") registered investment adviser with approximately \$37 billion of total committed capital under management as of June 30, 2010. Ares Operations LLC, an affiliate of Ares Management LLC, provides the administrative services necessary for us to operate.

Our common stock is traded on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol "ARCC." On September 1, 2010, the last reported sales price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Select Market was \$15.15 per share. The net asset value per share of our common stock at June 30, 2010 (the last date prior to the date of this prospectus on which we determined net asset value) was \$14.11.

Investing in our securities involves risks that are described in the "Risk Factors" section beginning on page 25 of this prospectus, including the risk of leverage.

We may offer, from time to time, in one or more offerings or series, up to \$1,000,000,000 of our common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights to purchase shares of our common stock or warrants representing rights to purchase shares of our common stock, preferred stock or debt securities, separately or as units comprised of any combination of the foregoing, which we refer to, collectively, as the "securities." The preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights and warrants offered hereby may be convertible or exchangeable into shares of our common stock. The securities may be offered at prices and on terms to be described in one or more supplements to this prospectus. In the event we offer common stock, the offering price per share of our common stock less any underwriting commissions or discounts will generally not be less than the net asset value per share of our common stock at the time we make the offering. However, we may issue shares of our common stock pursuant to this prospectus at a price per share that is less than our net asset value per share (a) in connection with a rights offering to our existing stockholders, (b) with the prior approval of the majority of our common stockholders or (c) under such circumstances as the SEC may permit. This prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement concisely provide important information about us that you should know before investing in our securities. Please read this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement before you invest and keep it for future reference. We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. This information is available free of charge by calling us collect at (310) 201-4200 or on our website at www.arescapitalcorp.com. The SEC also maintains a website at www.sec.gov that contains such

information.

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

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

The date of this prospectus is _____, 2010.

Table of Contents

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<u>Prospectus Summary</u>	1
<u>The Company</u>	1
<u>Offerings</u>	13
<u>Fees and Expenses</u>	15
<u>Selected Condensed Consolidated Financial Data of Ares Capital</u>	19
<u>Unaudited Selected Pro Forma Condensed Consolidated Statements of Operations</u>	23
<u>Unaudited Pro Forma Per Share Data</u>	24
<u>Risk Factors</u>	25
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	50
<u>Unaudited Pro Forma Condensed Consolidated Statements of Operations</u>	51
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	56
<u>Price Range of Common Stock and Distributions</u>	57
<u>Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	59
<u>Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations</u>	60
<u>Senior Securities</u>	94
<u>Business</u>	96
<u>Portfolio Companies</u>	112
<u>Management</u>	126
<u>Certain Relationships and Related Transactions</u>	151
<u>Control Persons and Principal Stockholders</u>	153
<u>Determination of Net Asset Value</u>	154
<u>Dividend Reinvestment Plan</u>	156
<u>Certain Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations</u>	158
<u>Description of Securities</u>	168
<u>Description of Our Capital Stock</u>	168
<u>Sales of Common Stock Below Net Asset Value</u>	176
<u>Issuance of Warrants or Securities to Subscribe For or Convertible Into Shares of Our Common Stock</u>	181
<u>Description of Our Preferred Stock</u>	182
<u>Description of Our Subscription Rights</u>	183
<u>Description of Our Warrants</u>	184
<u>Description of Our Debt Securities</u>	186
<u>Regulation</u>	198
<u>Custodian, Transfer and Dividend Paying Agent and Registrar</u>	204
<u>Brokerage Allocation and Other Practices</u>	204
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	205
<u>Legal Matters</u>	207
<u>Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm</u>	207
<u>Available Information</u>	207
<u>Financial Statements</u>	F-1

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we have filed with the SEC, using the "shelf" registration process. Under the shelf registration process, we may offer, from time to time, in one or more offerings or series, up to \$1,000,000,000 of our common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights to purchase shares of our common stock or warrants representing rights to purchase shares of our common stock, preferred stock or debt securities, separately or as units comprised of any combination of the foregoing, on terms to be determined at the time of the offering. The securities may be offered at prices and on terms described in one or more supplements to this prospectus. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities that we may offer. Each time we use this prospectus to offer securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. Please carefully read this prospectus and the prospectus supplement together with any exhibits and the additional information described under the headings "Available Information" and "Risk Factors" before you make an investment decision.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

This summary highlights some of the information contained elsewhere in this prospectus. It is not complete and may not contain all of the information that you may want to consider. You should read carefully the more detailed information set forth under "Risk Factors" and the other information included in this prospectus. Except where the context suggests otherwise, the terms "we," "us," "our," "the Company" and "Ares Capital" refer to Ares Capital Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries; "Ares Capital Management" or "the investment adviser" refers to Ares Capital Management LLC; "Ares Operations" refers to Ares Operations LLC; and "Ares" refers to Ares Partners Management Company LLC ("APMC") and its affiliated companies (other than portfolio companies of its affiliated funds), including Ares Management LLC, which we refer to separately as "Ares Management."

As described in more detail below, we consummated the acquisition (the "Allied Acquisition") of Allied Capital Corporation ("Allied Capital") on April 1, 2010. Other than as set forth in the pro forma financial information or otherwise specifically set forth herein, financial information presented herein for and as of periods ending on or prior to March 31, 2010 does not include any information in respect of Allied Capital. In addition, other than as set forth in the pro forma financial information or otherwise specifically set forth herein, financial information for the six months ended June 30, 2010, including, without limitation, with respect to the Company's consolidated statements of operations, stockholders' equity and cash flows, only includes results attributable to Allied Capital for the period beginning April 1, 2010.

THE COMPANY

Ares Capital, a Maryland corporation, is a specialty finance company that is a closed-end, non-diversified management investment company. We have elected to be regulated as a business development company, or a "BDC," under the Investment Company Act of 1940, or the "Investment Company Act." We were founded on April 16, 2004, were initially funded on June 23, 2004 and completed our initial public offering on October 8, 2004. We are one of the largest BDCs with approximately \$12 billion of total committed capital under management as of June 30, 2010, including available debt capacity (subject to leverage restrictions), funds co-managed by us and funds managed or sub-managed by our wholly owned portfolio company, Ivy Hill Asset Management, L.P. ("IHAM").

Ares Capital's investment objective is to generate both current income and capital appreciation through debt and equity investments. We invest primarily in U.S. middle market companies, where we believe the supply of primary capital is limited and the investment opportunities are most attractive. However, we may from time to time invest in larger companies. In this prospectus, we generally use the term "middle market" to refer to companies with annual EBITDA between \$10 million and \$250 million. As used herein, EBITDA represents net income before net interest expense, income tax expense, depreciation and amortization.

On April 1, 2010, we consummated the Allied Acquisition in an all stock merger whereby each existing share of common stock of Allied Capital was exchanged for 0.325 shares of our common stock. The Allied Acquisition was valued at approximately \$908 million as of April 1, 2010. In connection therewith, we issued approximately 58.5 million shares of our common stock to Allied Capital's then-existing stockholders, thereby resulting in our then-existing stockholders owning approximately 69% of the combined company and the then-existing Allied Capital stockholders owning approximately 31% of the combined company. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business We may be unable to realize the benefits anticipated by the Allied Acquisition, including estimated cost savings and synergies, or it may take longer than anticipated to achieve such benefits" for a description of the risks that the Company may face as a result of the Allied Acquisition.

We invest primarily in first and second lien senior loans and mezzanine debt, which in some cases includes an equity component. First and second lien senior loans generally are senior debt instruments that rank ahead of subordinated debt of a given portfolio company. These loans also have

Table of Contents

the benefit of security interests on the assets of the portfolio company, which may rank ahead of or be junior to other security interests. Mezzanine debt is subordinated to senior loans and is generally unsecured. Our investments have ranged between \$20 million and \$200 million each, although the investment sizes may be more or less than the targeted range. Our investment sizes are expected to grow with our capital availability.

To a lesser extent, we also make equity investments, which have generally been non-control equity investments of less than \$20 million (usually in conjunction with a concurrent loan investment). However, we may increase the size or nature of these investments. Also, as a result of the Allied Acquisition, Allied Capital's equity investments, including equity investments larger than those we have historically made and controlled portfolio company equity investments, became part of our portfolio. We intend to actively seek opportunities over time to dispose of certain of these investments and rotate them into higher-yielding first and second lien senior loans and mezzanine debt investments. However, there can be no assurance that this strategy will be successful. For risks relating to these investments, see "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Investments Investments in equity securities involve a substantial degree of risk."

The proportion of these investments will change over time given our views on, among other things, the economic and credit environment we are operating in. In connection with our investing activities, we may make commitments with respect to indebtedness or securities of a potential portfolio company substantially in excess of our final investment. In such situations, while we may initially agree to fund up to a certain dollar amount of an investment, we may syndicate a portion of such amount to third parties, such that we make a smaller investment than what was reflected in our original commitment.

The first and second lien senior loans generally have stated terms of three to 10 years and the mezzanine debt investments generally have stated terms of up to 10 years, but the expected average life of such first and second lien loans and mezzanine debt is generally between three and seven years. However, we may invest in securities with any maturity or duration. The debt that we invest in typically is not initially rated by any rating agency, but we believe that if such investments were rated, they would be below investment grade (rated lower than "Baa3" by Moody's Investors Service, lower than "BBB-" by Fitch Ratings or lower than "BBB-" by Standard & Poor's). We may invest without limit in debt of any rating, as well as debt that has not been rated by any nationally recognized statistical rating organization.

We believe that our investment adviser, Ares Capital Management, is able to leverage Ares' current investment platform, resources and existing relationships with financial sponsors, financial institutions, hedge funds and other investment firms to provide us with attractive investments. In addition to deal flow, the Ares investment platform assists our investment adviser in analyzing, structuring and monitoring investments. Ares has been in existence for more than 12 years and its senior principals have an average of over 20 years experience investing in senior loans, high yield bonds, mezzanine debt and private equity securities. The Company has access to the Ares staff of approximately 140 investment professionals and approximately 190 administrative professionals employed by Ares who provide assistance in accounting, legal, compliance, operations, technology and investor relations.

While our primary focus is to generate current income and capital appreciation through investments in first and second lien senior loans and mezzanine debt and, to a lesser extent, equity securities of eligible portfolio companies, we also may invest up to 30% of our portfolio in opportunistic investments of non-eligible portfolio companies. Specifically, as part of this 30% basket, we may invest in debt of middle market companies located outside of the United States, in investment funds that are operating pursuant to certain exceptions to the Investment Company Act, in advisers to similar investment funds and in debt and equity of public companies that do not meet the definition of

Table of Contents

eligible portfolio companies because their market capitalization of publicly traded equity securities exceeds the levels provided for in the Investment Company Act. We expect that these public companies generally will have debt that may be non-investment grade. From time to time we may also invest in high yield bonds, which, depending on the issuer, may or may not be included in this 30% basket.

We and GE Commercial Finance Investment Advisory Services LLC also co-manage an unconsolidated senior debt fund: the Senior Secured Loan Fund LLC (formerly known as the Unitranche Fund LLC), or the "Senior Secured Loan Fund."

We also manage an unconsolidated fund, AGILE Fund I, LLC (the "AGILE Fund"), and our wholly owned subsidiary A.C. Corporation manages three unconsolidated loan funds: Emporia Preferred Funding I, Ltd., Emporia Preferred Funding II, Ltd. and Emporia Preferred Funding III, Ltd. (collectively, the "Emporia Funds").

In addition, we have made investments in our portfolio company, IHAM, which manages five unconsolidated senior debt funds, Ivy Hill Middle Market Credit Fund, Ltd. ("Ivy Hill I"), Ivy Hill Middle Market Credit Fund II, Ltd. ("Ivy Hill II"), Ivy Hill Senior Debt Fund, L.P. and related vehicles ("Ivy Hill SDF" and, together with Ivy Hill I and Ivy Hill II, the "Ivy Hill Funds"), and Knightsbridge CLO 2007-1, Ltd. and Knightsbridge CLO 2008-1, Ltd. (the "Knightsbridge Funds"), and serves as the sub-adviser/sub-manager for four others: CoLTS 2005-1 Ltd., CoLTS 2005-2 Ltd. and CoLTS 2007-1 Ltd., or collectively, the "CoLTS Funds," and FirstLight Funding I, Ltd., or "FirstLight." As of June 30, 2010, IHAM had total committed capital under management of over \$2.9 billion, which includes approximately \$0.3 billion of capital committed by Ares Capital.

About Ares

Founded in 1997, Ares is a global alternative asset manager and SEC registered investment adviser with approximately \$37 billion of total committed capital under management and over 330 employees as of June 30, 2010.

Ares specializes in originating and managing assets in both the leveraged finance and private equity markets. Ares' leveraged finance activities include the origination, acquisition and management of senior loans, high yield bonds, mezzanine debt and special situation investments. Ares' private equity activities focus on providing flexible, junior capital to middle market companies. Ares has the ability to invest across a capital structure, from senior floating rate debt to common equity. This flexibility, combined with Ares' "buy and hold" philosophy, enables Ares to structure an investment to meet the specific needs of a company rather than the less flexible demands of the public markets.

Ares is comprised of the following groups:

Private Debt Group. The Ares Private Debt Group manages the assets of Ares Capital, Ares Credit Strategies Fund II, L.P. and Ares' private debt middle market financing business in Europe, Ares Capital Europe ("ACE"), which together had approximately \$13 billion of committed capital under management as of June 30, 2010. The Private Debt Group focuses primarily on non-syndicated first and second lien senior loans and mezzanine debt, which in some cases may include an equity component. The Private Debt Group also makes equity investments in private middle market companies, usually in conjunction with loans.

Capital Markets Group. The Ares Capital Markets Group manages approximately \$18 billion of committed capital as of June 30, 2010 through a variety of funds and investment vehicles, focusing primarily on syndicated senior secured loans, high yield bonds, distressed debt, other liquid fixed income investments and other publicly traded debt securities.

Table of Contents

Private Equity Group. The Ares Private Equity Group manages approximately \$6 billion of committed capital as of June 30, 2010, primarily through Ares Corporate Opportunities Fund L.P., Ares Corporate Opportunities Fund II, L.P. and Ares Corporate Opportunities Fund III, L.P. (collectively referred to as "ACOF"). ACOF generally makes private equity investments in amounts substantially larger than the private equity investments anticipated to be made by the Company. In particular, the Private Equity Group generally focuses on control-oriented equity investments in under-capitalized companies or companies with capital structure issues.

Ares' senior principals have been working together as a group for many years and have an average of over 20 years of experience in leveraged finance, private equity, distressed debt, investment banking and capital markets. They are backed by a large team of highly disciplined professionals. Ares' rigorous investment approach is based upon an intensive, independent financial analysis, with a focus on preservation of capital, diversification and active portfolio management. These fundamentals underlie Ares' investment strategy and have resulted in large pension funds, banks, insurance companies, endowments and high net worth individuals investing in Ares' funds.

Ares Capital Management

Ares Capital Management, our investment adviser, is served by a dedicated origination and transaction development team of approximately 65 investment professionals led by the senior partners of Ares Capital Management: Michael Arougheti, Eric Beckman, Kipp deVeer, Mitchell Goldstein and Michael Smith. Ares Capital Management leverages off of Ares' entire investment platform and benefits from the significant capital markets, trading and research expertise of Ares' investment professionals. Ares funds currently hold over 1,000 investments in over 30 different industries. Ares Capital Management's investment committee has eight members, including the senior partners of Ares Capital Management and certain Senior Partners of Ares' Capital Markets Group, Private Equity Group and the Managing Director of ACE.

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

We believe there are opportunities for us to invest in middle market companies for the following reasons:

We believe that the dislocation in the credit markets in recent years has resulted in reduced competition, a widening of interest spreads, increased fees and generally more conservative capital structures and deal terms. Although secondary loan prices have rebounded from historic lows, attractive opportunities to purchase debt in the secondary market continue to exist in certain situations.

We believe that many senior lenders have, in recent years, de-emphasized their service and product offerings to middle market businesses in favor of lending to large corporate clients and managing capital markets transactions. In addition, commercial and investment banks are severely limited in their ability to underwrite new financings as they seek to replenish their capital bases and reduce leverage, resulting in opportunities for alternative funding sources.

We believe there is increased demand among private middle market companies for primary capital. Many middle market firms have faced increased difficulty raising debt in the capital markets, as commercial and investment banks are capital-constrained and largely unable to underwrite and syndicate bank loans and high yield securities, particularly for middle market issuers.

Table of Contents

We believe there is a large pool of uninvested private equity capital for middle market companies. We expect private equity firms will seek to leverage their investments by combining equity capital with senior secured loans and mezzanine debt from other sources.

We believe that as of the date of this prospectus, the recent economic downturn has resulted (and will continue to result) in defaults and covenant breaches by middle market companies, which will require new junior capital to shore up liquidity or provide new capital through restructuring.

A high volume of senior secured and high yield debt was originated in the calendar years 2004 through 2007 and will come due in the near term and, accordingly, we believe that new financing opportunities will increase as many leveraged companies seek to refinance in the near term.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

We believe that we have the following competitive advantages over other capital providers to middle market companies:

Existing Investment Platform

As of June 30, 2010, Ares managed approximately \$37 billion of total committed capital under management in the related asset classes of non-syndicated first and second lien senior loans, syndicated loans, high yield bonds, mezzanine debt and private equity. We believe Ares' current investment platform provides a competitive advantage in terms of access to origination and marketing activities and diligence for Ares Capital. Specifically, the Ares platform provides the Company an advantage through its deal flow generation and investment evaluation process. Ares' asset management platform also provides additional market information, company knowledge and industry insight that benefit the investment and due diligence process. Ares' professionals maintain extensive financial sponsor and intermediary relationships, which provide valuable insight and access to transactions and information.

Seasoned Management Team

Ares' senior professionals have an average of over 20 years of experience in leveraged finance, including substantial experience in investing in leveraged loans, high yield bonds, mezzanine debt, distressed debt and private equity securities. Ares Capital Management's investment professionals and members of its investment committee also have significant experience investing across market cycles. As a result of Ares' extensive investment experience and the history of its seasoned management team, Ares has developed a strong reputation across U.S. and European capital markets. We believe that Ares' long history in the leveraged loan market and the extensive experience of the principals investing across market cycles provides Ares Capital Management with a competitive advantage in identifying, investing in, and managing a portfolio of investments in middle market companies.

Experience and Focus on Middle Market Companies

Ares has historically focused on investments in middle market companies and we benefit from this experience. In sourcing and analyzing deals, our investment adviser uses Ares' extensive network of relationships with intermediaries focused on middle market companies, including management teams, members of the investment banking community, private equity groups and other investment firms with whom Ares has long relationships. We believe this network enables us to attract well-positioned prospective portfolio company investments. Our investment adviser works closely with the Ares investment professionals, who oversee a portfolio of investments in over 1,000 companies and provide access to an extensive network of relationships and insights into industry trends and the state of the capital markets.

Table of Contents

Disciplined Investment Philosophy

In making its investment decisions, our investment adviser has adopted Ares' long-standing, consistent credit-based investment approach that was developed over 19 years ago by its founders. Specifically, Ares Capital Management's investment philosophy, portfolio construction and portfolio management involve an assessment of the overall macroeconomic environment, financial markets and company-specific research and analysis. Its investment approach emphasizes capital preservation, low volatility and minimization of downside risk. In addition to engaging in extensive due diligence from the perspective of a long-term investor, Ares Capital Management's approach seeks to reduce risk in investments by focusing on:

businesses with strong franchises and sustainable competitive advantages;

industries with positive long-term dynamics;

cash flows that are dependable and predictable;

management teams with demonstrated track records and economic incentives;

rates of return commensurate with the perceived risks; and

securities or investments that are structured with protective terms and covenants.

Extensive Industry Focus

We concentrate our investing activities in industries with a history of predictable and dependable cash flows and in which the Ares investment professionals have had extensive investment experience. Since its inception in 1997, Ares investment professionals have invested in over 30 different industries. Ares investment professionals have developed long-term relationships with management teams and management consultants in these industries and have accumulated substantial information and identified potential trends within these industries. The experience of Ares' investment professionals investing across these industries throughout various stages of the economic cycle provides our investment adviser with access to market insights and investment opportunities.

Flexible Transaction Structuring

We are flexible in structuring investments, including the types of securities in which we invest and the terms associated with such investments. Our investment adviser and its affiliates have extensive experience investing in a wide variety of securities for leveraged companies with a diverse set of terms and conditions. We believe this approach and experience enables our investment adviser to identify attractive investment opportunities throughout economic cycles and across a company's capital structure so we can make investments consistent with our stated investment objective and preserve principal while seeking appropriate risk adjusted returns. In addition, we have the ability to provide "one stop" financing with the ability to invest capital across the balance sheet and hold and syndicate larger investments than many of our competitors. The ability to underwrite, syndicate and hold larger investments benefits our stockholders by (a) potentially increasing net income and earnings through syndication, (b) increasing originated deal flow flexibility, (c) broadening market relationships and deal flow, (d) allowing us to optimize our portfolio composition and (e) allowing us to provide capital to middle market companies, which we believe currently have limited access to capital from traditional lending sources. We believe that the ability to provide capital at every level provides a strong value proposition to middle market borrowers and our senior debt capabilities provide superior deal origination and relative value analysis capabilities compared to traditional "mezzanine only" lenders.

Table of Contents

Broad Origination Strategy

Our investment adviser focuses on self-originating most of our investments by identifying a broad array of investment opportunities across multiple channels. It also leverages off of the extensive relationships of the broader Ares platform, including relationships with the companies in the funds managed by IHAM, to identify investment opportunities. We believe that this allows for asset selectivity and that there is a significant relationship between proprietary deal origination and credit performance. We believe that our focus on generating proprietary deal flow and lead investing also gives us greater control over capital structure, deal terms, pricing and documentation and provides us with the ability to actively manage our investments. Moreover, by leading the investment process, our investment adviser is often able to secure controlling positions in credit tranches, thereby providing additional control in investment outcomes. Our investment adviser also has originated substantial proprietary deal flow from middle market intermediaries, which often allows us to act as the sole or principal source of institutional capital to the borrower.

OPERATING AND REGULATORY STRUCTURE

Our investment activities are managed by Ares Capital Management and supervised by our board of directors, a majority of whom are independent of Ares and its affiliates. Ares Capital Management is an investment adviser that is registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, or the "Advisers Act." Under our amended and restated investment advisory and management agreement, referred to herein as our "investment advisory and management agreement," we have agreed to pay Ares Capital Management an annual base management fee based on our total assets, as defined under the Investment Company Act (other than cash and cash equivalents but including assets purchased with borrowed funds), and an incentive fee based on our performance. See "Management Investment Advisory and Management Agreement."

As a BDC, we are required to comply with certain regulatory requirements. While we are permitted to finance investments using debt, our ability to use debt is limited in certain significant respects. See "Regulation." We have elected to be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a regulated investment company, or a "RIC," under Subchapter M of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or the "Code." See "Certain Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations."

MARKET CONDITIONS

Due to volatility in global markets, the availability of capital and access to capital markets has been limited over the last two years. We have responded to constraints on raising new capital by pursuing other avenues of liquidity and growth, such as adjusting the pace of our investments, becoming more selective in evaluating investment opportunities, pursuing asset sales, developing our third-party asset management capabilities and/or reinvesting the proceeds from sales of lower yielding investments into higher yielding investments. We also intend to continue pursuing opportunities to manage third-party funds. As the global liquidity situation and market conditions evolve, we will continue to monitor and adjust our approach to funding accordingly. However, given the unprecedented nature of the volatility in the global markets, there can be no assurances that these activities will be successful. While levels of market disruption and volatility have improved, there can be no assurance that they will not worsen. If they do, we could face materially higher financing costs. Consequently, our operating strategy could be materially and adversely affected.

Consistent with the volatile market conditions of the general economy, during 2008 and much of 2009, the stocks of BDCs as an industry traded at near historic lows as a result of concerns over liquidity, credit quality, leverage restrictions and distribution requirements. As a result of this market volatility, several of our peers are no longer active in the market and are winding down their investments, have defaulted on their indebtedness and/or have decreased their distributions to

Table of Contents

stockholders. While market conditions have improved, we cannot assure you that the market pressures we face will not have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business Capital markets have recently been in a period of disruption and instability. These market conditions have materially and adversely affected debt and equity capital markets in the United States, which has had, and may in the future have, a negative impact on our business and operations."

ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

We believe that the dislocation in the credit markets has created compelling risk adjusted returns in both the primary and secondary markets. Further, the current dislocation and illiquidity in the credit markets has also increased the likelihood of further consolidation in our industry. To that end, over the past 12-18 months we and our portfolio company IHAM have evaluated (and expect to continue to evaluate in the future) a number of potential strategic acquisition opportunities, including acquisitions of:

asset portfolios;

contracts to manage collateralized loan obligation, or "CLO," vehicles and other investment vehicles;

other private and public finance companies or asset managers; and

selected secondary market assets.

For example, in June 2009 our portfolio company IHAM completed the acquisition of contracts to sub-manage approximately \$770 million of middle market loan assets in three CLO vehicles managed by affiliates of Wells Fargo & Company. IHAM also acquired certain equity interests in these three CLOs. On October 30, 2009, we completed our acquisition of Allied Capital's interests in the Senior Secured Loan Fund for \$165 million in cash and on December 29, 2009, we made an incremental investment in IHAM to facilitate its acquisition of Allied Capital's management rights in respect of, and interests in, Ivy Hill SDF for approximately \$33 million in cash. On March 24, 2010, we made an incremental investment in IHAM to facilitate its acquisition of Allied Capital's management rights in respect of, and a portion of its interests in, the Knightsbridge Funds. We also acquired interests in the Knightsbridge Funds. Finally, on April 1, 2010, we consummated the Allied Acquisition, becoming the largest business development company measured by market capitalization and total portfolio companies under management as of June 30, 2010. For further discussion on these transactions, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Allied Acquisition" and "Business Investments."

We and our portfolio company IHAM have been and from time to time engage in discussions with counterparties in respect of various potential strategic acquisition and investment transactions, including potential acquisitions of other finance companies. Some of these transactions could be material to our business and, if consummated, could be difficult to integrate, result in increased leverage or dilution and/or subject us to unexpected liabilities. However, none of these discussions has progressed to the point where the consummation of any such transaction could be deemed to be probable or reasonably certain as of the date of this prospectus. Consummation of any such transaction will be subject to completion of due diligence, finalization of key business and financial terms (including price) and negotiation of final definitive documentation as well as a number of other factors and conditions including, without limitation, the approval of our board of directors (after having determined that such transaction is in the best interest of our stockholders), any required third party consents and, in certain cases, the approval of our stockholders. We cannot predict how quickly the terms of any such transaction could be finalized, if at all. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that

Table of Contents

definitive documentation for any such transaction would be executed or even if executed, that any such transaction will be consummated. In connection with evaluating potential strategic acquisition and investment transactions, we have, and may in the future, incur significant expenses for the evaluation and due diligence investigation of these potential transactions.

LIQUIDITY

We are party to a senior secured revolving credit facility (as amended and restated, the "Revolving Credit Facility") that provides for up to \$775.0 million (and, to the extent we fully exercise the "accordion" feature of this facility, \$1.05 billion) of borrowings. The Revolving Credit Facility expires on January 22, 2013.

In addition, our wholly owned subsidiary Ares Capital CP Funding LLC ("Ares Capital CP") is party to a revolving facility (as amended, the "CP Funding Facility"), which, as amended, currently provides for up to \$400.0 million of borrowings. The CP Funding Facility expires on January 22, 2013 (with two one year extension options, subject to mutual consent).

We use the term "Facilities" to refer to the Revolving Credit Facility and the CP Funding Facility.

In July 2006, through ARCC Commercial Loan Trust 2006 ("ARCC CLO"), we completed a \$400.0 million debt securitization referred to herein as the "Debt Securitization" and issued approximately \$314.0 million principal amount of asset-backed notes (including \$50.0 million revolving notes, \$35.4 million of which were drawn down as of September 1, 2010), which we refer to as the "CLO Notes," to third parties that are secured by a pool of middle market loans that were purchased or originated by the Company. We serve as the servicer to ARCC CLO. The CLO Notes mature on December 20, 2019.

On April 1, 2010, as part of the Allied Acquisition, we assumed all of Allied Capital's outstanding debt obligations, including Allied Capital's publicly issued unsecured notes: the 6.625% Notes due on July 15, 2011 (the "2011 Notes"), the 6.000% Notes due on April 1, 2012 (the "2012 Notes") and the 6.875% Notes due on April 15, 2047 (the "2047 Notes" and, together with the 2011 Notes and the 2012 Notes, the "Unsecured Notes").

As of September 1, 2010, we had \$258.0 million outstanding under the Revolving Credit Facility and \$306.1 million outstanding under the CP Funding Facility. As of September 1, 2010, we also had outstanding \$214.4 million of CLO Notes that mature on December 20, 2019 and had outstanding \$669.6 million (principal amount of \$730.5 million) of Unsecured Notes as follows: \$307.7 million (principal amount of \$314.9 million) of 2011 Notes, \$181.2 million (principal amount of \$185.6 million) of 2012 Notes and \$180.7 million (principal amount of \$230.0 million) of 2047 Notes. See "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Financial Condition, Liquidity and Capital Resources."

RISK FACTORS

Investing in Ares Capital involves risks. The following is a summary of certain risks that you should carefully consider before investing in our securities. In addition, see "Risk Factors" beginning on page 25 for a more detailed discussion of the factors you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in our securities.

Risks Relating to Our Business

Capital markets have recently been in a period of disruption and instability. These market conditions have materially and adversely affected debt and equity capital markets in the

Table of Contents

United States, which has had, and may in the future have, a negative impact on our business and operations.

A failure on our part to maintain our status as a BDC would significantly reduce our operating flexibility.

We are dependent upon Ares Capital Management's key personnel for our future success and upon their access to Ares' investment professionals.

Our financial condition and results of operations depend on our ability to manage future growth effectively.

We may be unable to realize the benefits anticipated by the Allied Acquisition, including estimated cost savings and synergies, or it may take longer than anticipated to achieve such benefits.

Our ability to grow depends on our ability to raise capital.

Regulations governing our operation as a BDC affect our ability to, and the way in which we, raise additional capital.

We borrow money, which magnifies the potential for gain or loss on amounts invested and may increase the risk of investing with us.

In addition to regulatory requirements that restrict our ability to raise capital, the Facilities, the CLO Notes and the Unsecured Notes contain various covenants which, if not complied with, could accelerate repayment under the Facilities, the CLO Notes and the Unsecured Notes, thereby materially and adversely affecting our liquidity, financial condition and results of operations.

Our credit ratings may change and as a result the cost and flexibility under our debt instruments may change.

We operate in a highly competitive market for investment opportunities.

We may be subject to certain corporate-level taxes regardless of whether we continue to qualify as a RIC.

We may have difficulty paying our required distributions under applicable tax rules if we recognize income before or without receiving cash representing such income.

We may in the future determine to fund a portion of our investments with preferred stock, which would magnify the potential for gain or loss and the risks of investing in us in the same way as our borrowings.

We are exposed to risks associated with changes in interest rates.

Many of our portfolio investments are not publicly traded and, as a result, there is uncertainty as to the value of our portfolio investments.

The lack of liquidity in our investments may adversely affect our business.

We may experience fluctuations in our quarterly results.

There are significant potential conflicts of interest that could impact our investment returns.

Changes in laws or regulations governing our operations or the operations of our portfolio companies, changes in the interpretation thereof or newly enacted legislation and regulations, such as the Dodd-Frank Act, and any failure by us or our portfolio companies

Table of Contents

to comply with these laws or regulations, could require changes to certain business practices of us or our portfolio companies, negatively impact the operations, cash flows or financial condition of us or our portfolio companies, impose additional costs on us or our portfolio companies or otherwise adversely affect our business or the business of our portfolio companies.

Our investment adviser's liability is limited under the investment advisory and management agreement, and we are required to indemnify our investment adviser against certain liabilities, which may lead our investment adviser to act in a riskier manner on our behalf than it would when acting for its own account.

We may be obligated to pay our investment adviser incentive compensation even if we incur a loss.

We may not replicate Ares' historical success and our ability to enter into transactions with Ares and our other affiliates is restricted.

Risks Relating to Our Investments

Price declines and illiquidity in the corporate debt markets have adversely affected, and may in the future adversely affect, the fair value of our portfolio investments, reducing our net asset value through increased net unrealized depreciation.

Economic recessions or downturns could impair our portfolio companies and harm our operating results.

Investments in privately held middle market companies involve significant risks.

Our debt investments may be risky, and we could lose all or part of our investment.

Investments in equity securities involve a substantial degree of risk.

There may be circumstances where our debt investments could be subordinated to claims of other creditors or we could be subject to lender liability claims.

Our portfolio companies may incur debt or issue equity securities that rank equally with, or senior to, our investments in such companies.

When we are a debt or minority equity investor in a portfolio company, we may not be in a position to exert influence on the entity, and management of the company may make decisions that could decrease the value of our portfolio holdings.

Our portfolio companies may be highly leveraged.

Our investment adviser's incentive fee may induce Ares Capital Management to make certain investments, including speculative investments.

Edgar Filing: ARES CAPITAL CORP - Form N-2/A

Our investments in foreign debt may involve significant risks in addition to the risks inherent in U.S. investments. We may expose ourselves to risks if we engage in hedging transactions.

We may initially invest a portion of the net proceeds of offerings pursuant to this prospectus primarily in high-quality short-term investments, which will generate lower rates of return than those expected from the interest generated on first and second lien loans and mezzanine debt.

The Allied Acquisition may have triggered certain "change of control" provisions and other restrictions in certain of our and Allied Capital's contracts and the failure to obtain any required consents or waivers could adversely impact us.

Table of Contents

Risks Relating to Offerings Pursuant to this Prospectus

Our shares of common stock have traded at a discount from net asset value and may do so again in the future, which could limit our ability to raise additional equity capital.

There is a risk that investors in our equity securities may not receive dividends or that our dividends may not grow over time and that investors in our debt securities may not receive all of the interest income to which they are entitled.

Provisions of the Maryland General Corporation Law and of our charter and bylaws could deter takeover attempts and have an adverse impact on the price of our common stock.

Investing in our securities may involve an above average degree of risk.

The market price of our common stock may fluctuate significantly.

The net asset value per share of our common stock may be diluted if we sell shares of our common stock in one or more offerings at prices below the then current net asset value per share of our common stock or securities to subscribe for or convertible into shares of our common stock.

Your interest in us may be diluted if you do not fully exercise your subscription rights in any rights offering. In addition, if the subscription price is less than our net asset value per share, then you will experience an immediate dilution of the aggregate net asset value of your shares.

Investors in offerings of our common stock will likely incur immediate dilution upon the closing of such offering.

Our stockholders will experience dilution in their ownership percentage if they do not participate in our dividend reinvestment plan.

Our stockholders may receive shares of our common stock as dividends, which could result in adverse tax consequences to stockholders.

Sales of substantial amounts of our common stock in the public market may have an adverse effect on the market price of our common stock.

The trading market or market value of our publicly issued debt securities may fluctuate.

Terms relating to redemption may materially adversely affect your return on any debt securities that we may issue.

Our credit ratings may not reflect all risks of an investment in our debt securities.

OUR CORPORATE INFORMATION

Edgar Filing: ARES CAPITAL CORP - Form N-2/A

Our administrative offices are located at 2000 Avenue of the Stars, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90067, telephone number (310) 201-4200, and our executive offices are located at 280 Park Avenue, 22nd Floor, Building East, New York, New York 10017, telephone number (212) 750-7300.

Table of Contents

OFFERINGS

We may offer, from time to time, in one or more offerings or series, up to \$1,000,000,000 of our common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, subscription rights to purchase shares of our common stock or warrants representing rights to purchase shares of our common stock, preferred stock or debt securities, or units comprised of any combination of the foregoing, on terms to be determined at the time of the offering. We will offer our securities at prices and on terms to be set forth in one or more supplements to this prospectus. The offering price per share of our common stock, less any underwriting commissions or discounts, generally will not be less than the net asset value per share of our common stock at the time of an offering. However, we may issue shares of our common stock pursuant to this prospectus at a price per share that is less than our net asset value per share (a) in connection with a rights offering to our existing stockholders, (b) with the prior approval of the majority of our common stockholders or (c) under such other circumstances as the SEC may permit. Any such issuance of shares of our common stock below net asset value may be dilutive to the net asset value of our common stock. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Offerings Pursuant to this Prospectus."

At our 2010 Annual Stockholders Meeting, subject to certain determinations required to be made by our board of directors, our stockholders approved our ability to sell or otherwise issue shares of our common stock, not exceeding 25% of our then outstanding common stock, at a price below the then current net asset value per share during a period beginning on June 7, 2010 and expiring on the earlier of the one-year anniversary of the date of the 2010 Annual Stockholders Meeting and the date of our 2011 Annual Stockholders Meeting, which is expected to be held in May 2011.

We may offer our securities directly to one or more purchasers, including existing stockholders in a rights offering, through agents that we designate from time to time or to or through underwriters or dealers. The prospectus supplement relating to each offering will identify any agents or underwriters involved in the sale of our securities, and will set forth any applicable purchase price, fee, commission or discount arrangement between us and our agents or underwriters or among our underwriters or the basis upon which such amount may be calculated. See "Plan of Distribution." We may not sell any of our securities through agents, underwriters or dealers without delivery of a prospectus supplement describing the method and terms of the offering of our securities.

Set forth below is additional information regarding offerings of our securities:

Use of proceeds	Unless otherwise specified in a prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of our securities for general corporate purposes, which includes, among other things, (a) investing in portfolio companies in accordance with our investment objective and strategies and market conditions and (b) repaying indebtedness. Each supplement to this prospectus relating to an offering will more fully identify the use of the proceeds from such offering. See "Use of Proceeds."
Distributions	We intend to distribute quarterly dividends to our stockholders out of assets legally available for distribution. Our quarterly dividends, if any, will be determined by our board of directors. For more information, see "Price Range of Common Stock and Distributions."
Taxation	We have elected to be treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a RIC. As a RIC, we generally will not pay corporate-level U.S. federal income taxes on any income and gain that we distribute to our stockholders as dividends on a timely basis. Among other things, in order to maintain our RIC status, we must meet specified income source and asset diversification requirements and distribute annually generally an amount equal to at least 90% of our investment

Table of Contents

Dividend reinvestment plan	<p>company taxable income, out of assets legally available for distribution. See "Risk Factors Risks Relating to Our Business We may be subject to certain corporate-level taxes regardless of whether we continue to qualify as a RIC" and "Price Range of Common Stock and Distributions."</p> <p>We have a dividend reinvestment plan for our stockholders. This is an "opt out" dividend reinvestment plan. As a result, if we declare a cash dividend, then stockholders' dividends will be automatically reinvested in additional shares of our common stock, unless they specifically "opt out" of the dividend reinvestment plan so as to receive cash. Stockholders whose cash dividends are reinvested in additional shares of our common stock will be subject to the same U.S. federal, state and local tax consequences as stockholders who elect to receive their dividends in cash. See "Dividend Reinvestment Plan."</p>
The NASDAQ Global Select Market symbol	"ARCC"
Anti-takeover provisions	<p>Our board of directors is divided into three classes of directors serving staggered three-year terms. This structure is intended to provide us with a greater likelihood of continuity of management, which may be necessary for us to realize the full value of our investments. A staggered board of directors also may serve to deter hostile takeovers or proxy contests, as may certain other measures adopted by us. See "Description of Our Capital Stock."</p>
Leverage	<p>We borrow funds to make additional investments. We use this practice, which is known as "leverage," to attempt to increase returns to our common stockholders, but it involves significant risks. See "Risk Factors," "Senior Securities" and "Regulation Indebtedness and Senior Securities." With certain limited exceptions, we are only allowed to borrow amounts such that our asset coverage, as defined in the Investment Company Act, equals at least 200% after such borrowing. The amount of leverage that we employ at any particular time will depend on our investment adviser's and our board of directors' assessments of market and other factors at the time of any proposed borrowing.</p>
Management arrangements	<p>Ares Capital Management serves as our investment adviser. Ares Operations serves as our administrator. For a description of Ares Capital Management, Ares Operations, Ares and our contractual arrangements with these companies, see "Management Investment Advisory and Management Agreement," and " Administration Agreement."</p>
Available information	<p>We are required to file periodic reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. This i</p>