

ABRAXAS PETROLEUM CORP
Form 8-A12B
July 24, 2008
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 8 A

FOR REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN CLASSES OF SECURITIES

PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(b) OR 12 (g) OF THE

SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

ABRAXAS PETROLEUM CORPORATION

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

NEVADA

(State of incorporation or organization)

500 North Loop 1604 East, Suite 100, San Antonio, Texas 78232

74-2584033

(I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)

(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

Securities to be registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Common Stock, par value \$.01 per share

(Title of Class)

Securities to be registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

NONE

(Title of Class)

Name of each exchange on which each class is to be registered

The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC

If this form relates to the registration of a class of securities pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Exchange Act and is effective pursuant to General Instruction A.(c), check the following box. [X]

If this form relates to the registration of a class of securities pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Exchange Act and is effective pursuant to General Instruction A.(d), check the following box. []

Item 1. Description of Securities to be Registered.

Abraxas is currently authorized to issue up to 200,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share.

As of July 23, 2008, there were 49,167,134 shares of the common stock issued and outstanding. Holders of the common stock are entitled to cast one vote for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders and are not entitled to cumulate votes for the election of directors. Holders of common stock do not have preemptive rights to subscribe for additional shares of common stock issued by us.

Holders of the common stock are entitled to receive dividends as may be declared by the Board of Directors out of funds legally available therefor.

Under the terms of Abraxas' credit facility, Abraxas may not pay dividends on shares of the common stock. In the event of liquidation, holders of the common stock are entitled to share pro rata in any distribution of Abraxas' assets remaining after payment of liabilities, subject to the preferences and rights of the holders of any outstanding shares of preferred stock. All of the outstanding shares of the common stock are fully paid and nonassessable.

Abraxas' articles of incorporation authorize the issuance of up to 1,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.01 per share, in one or more series. The Board of Directors is authorized, without any further action by the stockholders, to determine the dividend rights, dividend rate, conversion rights, voting rights, rights and terms of redemption, liquidation preferences, sinking fund terms and other rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions of any series of preferred stock, the number of shares constituting any such series, and the designation thereof. The rights of the holders of common stock will be subject to, and may be adversely affected by, the rights of holders of any preferred stock that may be issued in the future.

Anti-takeover Effects of Certain Provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

Abraxas' Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws provide for the Board of Directors to be divided into three classes of directors serving staggered three-year terms. As a result, approximately one-third of the Board of Directors will be elected each year. The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws provide that the Board of Directors will consist of not less than three nor more than twelve members, with the exact number to be determined from time to time by the affirmative vote of a majority of directors then in office. The Board of Directors, and not the stockholders, has the authority to determine the number of directors, and could prevent any stockholder from obtaining majority representation on Abraxas' Board of Directors by enlarging the Board of Directors and by filling the new directorships with the stockholder's own nominees. In addition, directors may be removed by the stockholders only for cause.

The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws provide that special meetings of stockholders of Abraxas may be called only by the Chairman of the Board, the President or a majority of the members of the Board of Directors. This provision may make it more difficult for stockholders to take actions opposed by the Board of Directors.

The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws provide that any action required to be taken or which may be taken by holders of Abraxas common stock must be effected at a duly called annual or special meeting of such holders, and may not be taken by any written consent of such stockholders. These provisions may have the effect of delaying consideration of a stockholder proposal until the next annual meeting unless a special meeting is called by the persons set forth above. The provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws prohibiting stockholder action by written consent could prevent the holders of a majority of the voting power of Abraxas from using the written consent procedure to take stockholder action and taking action by consent without giving all the stockholders of Abraxas entitled to vote on a proposed action the opportunity to participate in determining such proposed action.

Anti-Takeover Statutes

Chapter 78 of the Nevada Revised Statutes, which we refer to as the Nevada GCL, contains two provisions, described below as *Combination Provisions* and the *Control Share Act*, that may make the unsolicited or hostile attempts to acquire control of a corporation through certain types of transactions more difficult.

Restrictions on Certain Combinations between Nevada Resident Corporations and Interested Stockholders.

The Nevada GCL includes certain provisions (the *Combination Provisions*) prohibiting certain combinations (generally defined to include certain mergers, disposition of assets transactions, and share issuance or transfer transactions) between a resident domestic corporation and an interested stockholder (generally defined to be the beneficial owner of 10% or more of the voting power of the outstanding shares of the corporation), except those combinations which are approved by the board of directors before the interested stockholder first obtained a 10% interest in the corporation's stock. There are additional exceptions to the prohibition, which apply to combinations if they occur more than three years after the interested stockholder's date of acquiring shares. The *Combination Provisions* apply unless the corporation elects against their application in its original articles of incorporation or an amendment thereto, or timely elected against their application in its bylaws no later than October 31, 1991. Abraxas' Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws do not currently contain a provision rendering the *Combination Provisions* inapplicable.

Nevada Control Share Act.

Nevada Revised Statutes 78.378 through 78.3793, inclusive, which we refer to as the *Control Share Act*, imposes procedural hurdles on and curtails greenmail practices of corporate raiders. The *Control Share Act* temporarily disenfranchises the voting power of control shares of a person or group (*Acquiring Person*) purchasing a controlling interest in an issuing corporation (each as defined in the Nevada GCL) not opting out of the *Control Share Act*. In this regard, the *Control Share Act* will apply to an issuing corporation unless, before an acquisition is made, the articles of incorporation or bylaws in effect on the tenth day following the acquisition of a controlling interest provide that it is inapplicable. Abraxas' articles of incorporation and bylaws do not currently contain a provision rendering the *Control Share Act* inapplicable.

Under the *Control Share Act*, an issuing corporation is a corporation organized in Nevada which has 200 or more stockholders, at least 100 of whom are stockholders of record and residents of Nevada, and which does business in Nevada directly or through an affiliated company. Abraxas' status at the time of the occurrence of a transaction governed by the *Control Share Act* (assuming that our articles of incorporation or bylaws have not theretofore been amended to include an opting out provision) would determine whether the *Control Share Act* is applicable.

The *Control Share Act* requires an *Acquiring Person* to take certain procedural steps before such *Acquiring Person* can obtain the full voting power of the control shares. Control shares are the shares of a corporation (1) acquired or offered to be acquired which will enable the *Acquiring Person* to own a controlling interest, and (2) acquired within 90 days immediately preceding that date. A controlling interest is defined as the ownership of shares which would enable the *Acquiring Person* to exercise certain graduated amounts (beginning with one-fifth) of all voting power of the corporation. The *Acquiring Person* may not vote any control shares without first obtaining approval from the stockholders not characterized as interested stockholders (as defined below).

To obtain voting rights in control shares, the *Acquiring Person* must file a statement at the registered office of the issuer (*Offeror's Statement*) setting forth certain information about the acquisition or intended acquisition of stock. The *Offeror's Statement* may also request a special meeting of stockholders to determine the voting rights to be accorded to the *Acquiring Person*. A special stockholders' meeting must then be held at the *Acquiring Person's* expense within 30 to 50 days after the *Offeror's Statement* is filed. If a special meeting is not requested by the *Acquiring Person*, the matter will be addressed at the next regular or special meeting of stockholders.

At the special or annual meeting at which the issue of voting rights of control shares will be addressed, interested stockholders may not vote on the question of granting voting rights to control the corporation or its

Edgar Filing: ABRAXAS PETROLEUM CORP - Form 8-A12B

parent unless the articles of incorporation of the issuing corporation provide otherwise. Our articles of incorporation do not currently contain a provision allowing for such voting power.

If full voting power is granted to the Acquiring Person by the disinterested stockholders, and the Acquiring Person has acquired control shares with a majority or more of the voting power, then (unless otherwise provided in the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws in effect on the tenth day following the acquisition of a controlling interest) all stockholders of record, other than the Acquiring Person, who have not voted in favor of authorizing voting rights for the control shares, must be sent a dissenter's notice advising them of the fact and of their right to receive fair value for their shares. Our articles of incorporation and bylaws do not provide otherwise. By the date set in the dissenter's notice, which may not be less than 30 nor more than 60 days after the dissenter's notice is delivered, any such stockholder may demand to receive from the corporation the fair value for all or part of his shares. Fair value is defined in the Control Share Act as not less than the highest price per share paid by the Acquiring Person in an acquisition.

The Control Share Act permits a corporation to redeem the control shares in the following two instances, if so provided in the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the corporation in effect on the tenth day following the acquisition of a controlling interest: (1) if the Acquiring Person fails to deliver the Offeror's Statement to the corporation within 10 days after the Acquiring Person's acquisition of the control shares; or (2) an Offeror's Statement is delivered, but the control shares are not accorded full voting rights by the stockholders. Our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws do not address this matter.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for the common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company.

Item 2. Exhibits.

Under the instructions of Form 8-A, no exhibits are required to be filed because no other securities of the Registrant are registered on The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC and the securities registered hereby are not being registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Edgar Filing: ABRAXAS PETROLEUM CORP - Form 8-A12B

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 12 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized.

Date: July 24, 2008.

ABRAXAS PETROLEUM CORPORATION

By: /s/ Chris E. Williford

Chris E. Williford

Executive Vice President, Chief Financial

Officer and Treasurer