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BEAR STEARNS COMPANIES INC Form 424B3

Spread (plus or minus):

May 18, 2001

PRICING SUPPLEMENT NO. 45 Rule 424(b)(3) DATED: May 15, 2001 File No. 333-52902 (To Prospectus dated January 11, 2001, and Prospectus Supplement dated January 11, 2001) \$9,015,893,162 THE BEAR STEARNS COMPANIES INC. MEDIUM-TERM NOTES, SERIES B Principal Amount: \$15,000,000 Floating Rate Notes [] Book Entry Notes [x] Original Issue Date: 5/18/2001 Fixed Rate Notes [x] Certificated Notes [] Maturity Date: 5/17/2002 CUSIP#: 073928UC5 Option to Extend Maturity: No [x] Yes [] Final Maturity Date: Redeemable On Price(s) Date(s) Price(s) Price(s) Optional Optional N/A N/A N/A N/A Applicable Only to Fixed Rate Notes: Interest Rate: 4.350% Interest Payment Dates: * Applicable Only to Floating Rate Notes: _____ Interest Rate Basis: Maximum Interest Rate: [] Commercial Paper Rate Minimum Interest Rate: [] Federal Funds Rate Interest Reset Date(s): [] Treasury Rate Interest Reset Period: [] LIBOR Reuters Interest Payment Date(s): [] LIBOR Telerate [] Prime Rate [] CMT Rate Initial Interest Rate: Interest Payment Period: Index Maturity:

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* On November 17, 2001 and at Maturity.

The distribution of Notes will conform to the requirements set forth in Rule 2720 of the NASD Conduct Rules.