Management of Northbrook, Ill., has signed a long-term agreement with the city of Mound Golf Course on June 1. Mound was built as part of the WPA, the Depression-era public works program. Measuring 2,826 yards, it was designed by pioneering golf course architect Hipper Lawrence. Prior to joining the Karsten Golf Course two years ago, Lawrence was the head professional for Desert Highlands.

"We felt our interests were better served if we weren't involved with the management and were just landlords," Gray said. "It's working well."

Management companies come in all sizes and shapes. The 28 responding to this month's survey operate anywhere from one to 140 courses. They own, lease or operate municipal, daily-fee, private and resort facilities in all parts of the country. And they provide services ranging from simply keeping the books to building and managing an entire operation. An individual, group or municipality considering hiring a management company has to ask, "Why can they do a better job than I can?" said Earl Collings, publications editor for the National Golf Foundation.

"Any golf course that goes to a management company has to be feeling economic pressure from its current practices." Sometimes that means the golf course is losing money or not making as much as the owner thinks it should, Collings said. "Or developers, 50 percent of whom have never operated a golf course, may not want to be involved in the day-to-day operation, he added.

**The Selection**

How does one select a management company? Cost is naturally a big consideration. Fee structures and volume purchase savings. But is bigger necessarily better when it comes to management companies? "Running golf courses is all we do," said Jerry Owens, Southeast regional superintendent for Kemper Sports Management, listed a number of questions golf course owners frequently ask when interviewing management companies, including:

- **What services do you operate that are similar to mine?**
- **What is the fee structure?**
- **What services do you provide?**
- **What is the financial stability of the company?**

"Management is really a philosophy and philosophy changes from time to time, place to place," agreed Thomas Benniston of Club Development Interests.

**The Difference**

Some companies are much larger and more national in scope than others. Large companies like AGC (140 courses) and Club Corporation International (310 courses) may have advantages in overall experience, staff size and volume purchase savings. But is bigger necessarily better when it comes to management companies? "Running golf courses is all we do," said Jerry Owens, Southeast regional superintendent for Kemper Sports Management, listed a number of questions golf course owners frequently ask when interviewing management companies, including:

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IRVING, Texas — Crittenden Research Institute will host an executive briefing here Aug. 1920 for presidents, chief executive officers and senior real estate executives.

"The briefing will be held at the Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, 8440 Freeport Parkway. Key issues to be discussed include how to acquire, negotiate and hold under-performing real estate who's lending and how much money you can actually get; negotiation tactics that keep you in control of your own investment, financial structures that close the equity gap, and how to attract equity investors.

"Market opportunities will also be discussed. Reservations may be made by contacting Crittenden.

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By Peter Driscoll

"They (American Golf Corp.) operate and maintain the course better than we would have." — Dan Gray, managing general partner of River Oaks Golf Plantation, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

There, in a nut shell, is the primary reason golf course management companies are taking over in an increasing number of facilities across the country.

Gray is a member of the limited partner board of directors and is managed by executive director of the Grand Strand Golf Course Owners Association.

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