Management of Northbrook, Ill., has signed a management contract for two municipal golf courses, one of which will open next May.

There, in a nutshell, is the primary reason golf course management companies are taking on more and more managing number of facilities across the country.

Gray is a member of the limited partner.

By Peter Blais
"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.

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Kemper Sports began managing and operating 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 pioneeering golf course architect Hipper Campbell.

Pipestone is on schedule to open with upscale playing conditions next fall.

"We’re thrilled to have been selected to manage these courses, and approach this opportunity with the same philosophy we use at Kemper Lakes, which hosted the 1989 PGA Championship to offer the best daily fee golf in the area," said Kemper Sports Vice President Tom Lenz.

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The Grand Strand Golf Executives Association was formed in 1977 to promote golf in the Myrtle Beach area. The golf package plans developed by members have been successful.

The GSEGA also serves as a means for golf course owners to work on the national level to help protect the interests of golf course owners. We also think we have something to contribute to the owners because our association has a great deal of experience in dealing with the public and the traveling golfer."

Mike Hughes, executive director of the Grand Strand Golf Executives Association, said that the GSEGA, and other groups like it, are working to protect the interests of golf course owners. The Grand Strand Golf Executives Association is a private organization that represents a large group of innovative, progressive and forward-thinking owners. They are increasing the need to act in concert on mutual concerns, especially in times of increasing regulatory pressure on golf course operations.

"Their success in working together speaks for itself and should serve as a model for other owners around the country."

Financing seminar scheduled for August

IRVING, Texas — Crittenden Research Institute will host an executive briefing here Aug. 19-20 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 build under-performing or real-estate who’s lending and how much money you can actually get; negotiation tactics that keep you in control of your investment; financing 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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Management companies come in all shapes and sizes

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Management companies come in all shapes and sizes. We have people with expertise in golf course agronomics, marketing, finances, food and beverage and pro shop operations. We produce a high-quality product at a lower cost because we can make purchases in big blocks. Our expertise and low cost are major selling points." But size alone shouldn’t be the deciding factor, Collings said. “This is just a hypothesis, but I feel a company that manages too many courses can become detached and too tied to a certain formula,” the NGF employee said. “Courses and how they should be managed are very site specific. If I started my own management company I would do custom management and operate just five or six courses.” Owens said AGC has made management more site specific by hiring local managers to run their operations. For instance, the general manager at Carolina Shores and River Oaks has lived in the area more than five years. “We bring in people from California (corporate headquarters) to make suggestions. But the general manager makes the final decisions,” Owens said. AGC also recently reorganized its operational structure so that on-site managers are directly responsible for their operations, while regional and national staff like Owens, “really work for them. We’ve inverted the pyramid so the onsite people have the responsibility,” Owens said. What does a management company do once it takes over a course? “There are three ingredients to being successful,” said Steve Lambert, senior vice president of Jim Colbert Golf, Inc. “We get the golf course in good condition, get the people to the course, then follow through with strong customer service.” — Steve Lambert, Jim Colbert Golf, Inc.

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