

## MESSAGE

FROM CHARLES SMITH, PRESIDENT & CEO

I want to greet you in this new year with great news about our 2016 performance. As we tallied up sales and reviewed the North American market, we saw an uptick in our company's market share. We may finally be recovering from the leftovers of the recession. We've modernized our plants, realigned our marketing partnership and product mix, and listened to our employees to be poised for a successful 2017.

This upbeat view is thanks to everyone's focus on making General Shale the best we can be. We will stay our course this year with an emphasis on product development and enhancements to strengthen our position as the premier clay products manufacturer in North America's residential market. We also will improve our position as the right choice for commercial projects.

Arriscraft natural stone products will be an important part of our growth strategy, as trends show that homeowners want wall accents that complement General Shale brick.

A new development that will further drive sales is the inclusion of Pipelife Jetstream into our North American family of Wienerberger companies. The synergy of our hardscapes with Pipelife, one of the world's leading suppliers of plastic pipe systems, will enable us to grab a greater share of construction projects' budgets. Learn more at [pipelife-jetstream.com](http://pipelife-jetstream.com).

Thank you again for a great 2016 as we roll up our sleeves for an even greater 2017.

Sincerely,



Charles Smith  
President & CEO  
General Shale



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# SOCON UNIVERSITIES A GREAT MARKET ALL GENERAL SHALE PRODUCTS

## GENERAL SHALE HELPS RAISE MONEY FOR NISWONGER CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

During the Southern Conference Men's and Women's Basketball Tournament, General Shale's District Sales Manager Matt Mara met with SoCon executives about General Shale's capabilities and products.

"I had a great presentation for them on the background and history of General Shale and what we can do for them at their respective university campuses," explains Mara. "We now have several products in our portfolio that appeal to educational institutions like brick, natural stone, Arriscraft stone and even landscaping products."

One of the benefits that Mara emphasized is General Shale being able to match existing styles on each campus as part of what the company offers to customers.

He also showed several examples of cost-savings for the schools in unique ways.

"One of the examples I gave them was from Miami University in Ohio," says Mara. "The school had existing Kentucky Field Stone. But we showed them a similar Arriscraft product that matched. And although the Arriscraft product itself was more expensive, overall on the project they saved \$700,000 in labor. For a public institution, that's a huge savings!"

Mara says the SoCon Sponsorship is a great investment for General Shale because of the potential projects at these universities. He says the SoCon executives were impressed with the wide and diverse product line that General Shale carries and at the end of the day they wanted to hear more about how they could save money with General Shale.

General Shale took part in the annual Mountain States Health Alliance Radiothon to raise money for Niswonger Children's Hospital, located in the company's headquarters of Johnson City, Tennessee. The hospital serves children in a four-state area of Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, Western North Carolina and Southeastern Kentucky.

This year's radiothon was the 5th annual fundraiser and with General Shale's help, the hospital surpassed its goal of \$270,000 with \$328,340 raised.

The two-day event was held in the lobby of Niswonger Children's Hospital from February 27-28, but also included phone banks at two other area hospitals. Volunteers answered donor calls, as well as calls from family members and friends. The event was broadcast on several radio outlets and covered by media around the region.

The General Shale team was made up of Mark Kinser, Scott Ledford, Brian Ogle, Sabra Simpson, Alison Kestner, Jonathan Bailey, Dawn Henning, Richard Baker and Bill Alvis, who answered phones for one hour and raised almost \$11,000!

How do you build a legend?

With a strong foundation.

Hard work, dedication and old-fashioned Southern grit—that's how legends are built. We make our bricks the same way. General Shale is a proud sponsor of the Southern Conference Basketball Tournament.

General Shale  
GeneralShale.com





# GENERAL SHALE SCORES WITH SOUTHERN CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP

For the third year, General Shale was proud to be a presenting sponsor of the Southern Conference Men's and Women's Basketball Championships. The Southern Conference is made up of Wofford College, Samford University, Mercer University, Western Carolina University, East Tennessee State University, Virginia Military Institute, The Citadel, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and Furman University.

These schools are all within the General Shale footprint and in the prime markets with direct locations. Director of Marketing Dawn Henning says it's a great way to be in touch with the customer base.

In years past, General Shale has tried a "hard sell," bringing products to the conference tournament held in the beginning of March in Asheville, N.C. But after realizing that people rarely have buying brick on their mind when they come to watch basketball, the company opted for more of a "soft sell."

"We realized that it was more about having fun having fun and watching basketball and not so much making the tournament a sales pitch," explains Henning. "So we changed from trying so hard to sell brick to just being there to support the community and watch some good basketball."

And there was some good basketball. In fact, East Tennessee State University, which is located in Johnson City, won the tournament and made it to the NCAA Tournament. And if celebrating a win for the hometown team wasn't enough, General Shale may be celebrating a big sale as well after being credited with saving ETSU's run in the tournament.

As Henning explains, she and her husband sat in the same seats the entire tournament. And in front of them sat the same man for each game as ETSU advanced further in the tournament...except for the championship.

"ETSU was behind at this point in the final game and I looked down to see that our new friend had actually moved one seat over from



where he had sat the whole time before. So I alerted him to this, and asked him to move back to his 'good luck seat.' When he did, ETSU started coming back and won the game. Afterwards he jokingly told me that we had 'saved the whole tournament,' Henning recalls with a laugh.

Turns out, that fan in front was actually a local contractor from Johnson City and now a possible customer...not from seeing General Shale brick products at the tournament, but from the relationship he developed with General Shale representatives while having fun watching basketball.

General Shale has just signed another three-year commitment with the Southern Conference, which again includes sponsorship of the tournament and the General Shale Student Athlete of the Week throughout the season.

"It's been great working with the people involved in the Southern Conference," says Henning. "They are very professional and proactive in all that they do. It's been a great partnership that we are excited to continue."

The Southern Conference Men's Basketball Championship presented by General Shale has the proud distinction of being the oldest collegiate league basketball tournament in America.

# ICOMM CONTINUES TO MAKE WORK BETTER FOR EMPLOYEES

Each quarter, we feature specific teams that are using Wienerberger's iComm intranet system. This time, we'll look at General Shale's Human Resources Team and Arriscraft's Finance Team.

## General Shale Human Resources

The General Shale Human Resources Team is led by **Scott Ledford** and includes the following members:

- **Sabra Simpson, Payroll Manager**
- **Karen Cutshall, Payroll Specialist**
- **Kim White, Payroll Specialist**
- **Alison Kestner, Benefits Manager**
- **Laura Day, Benefits Coordinator**
- **Josh Conkle, Recruiting and Training Specialist**
- **Kim Witherspoon, Reception and HR Assistant**

Ledford says, "We're the service organization focused on the 'people' side of the business. We want to make sure our employees' needs are attended to, including personal and professional development."



**Scott Ledford**

Ledford says his team has used iComm as a platform to connect with colleagues worldwide. He adds, "It's good to share ideas and it has provided some fun with the lighter side of the business ... it's got that social side."

The Human Resources Department has used iComm to showcase some of its involvement in

charitable organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the American Heart Association.

"What it has certainly been is a great tool for us to connect. As the site continues to develop, I see more opportunities for us to share on a global scale those initiatives that are not country-specific but things we all do to inspire and be more involved," says Ledford. "It makes the world seem smaller when you can connect with your colleagues, and it fosters more of a family feel."

## Arriscraft Finance Team

The Finance Team at Arriscraft is headed by Director of Finance **Laurie Wright** and includes the following employees:

- **Nancy Miller, Accounts Payable**
- **Catherine Barsby, Accounts Receivable**
- **Rebecca Fenech, Financial Accountant**
- **Sue Burnside, Production Coordinator**

Wright says she enjoys starting her day by reading the news from around the world on iComm.

"We are subscribed to updates for some departments in Austria. We like to see what's going on," Wright says. "The biggest advantage to iComm is building that community, especially for us in Canada."



**Laurie Wright**

"There was a user in Colorado asking how you do certain things, and I thought, 'oh that's a good question.' That question actually prompted a training session of the business information center," Wright recalls.

"That was really helpful because with staffing changes it brought everyone up to speed and it was spurred by someone's question hundreds of miles away."





# TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

## USING THE WELLNESS PROGRAM



### HOW GS STRONG HELPS YOU & YOUR FAMILY

Gym reimbursements if employees meet criteria (see attached memo)

Onsite biometric screenings\*

Reimbursement for various races, fun runs, triathlons for employees and family members

Health Risk Assessment with biometrics to all employees enrolled in medical - \$25 gift card incentive if participate\*

Tobacco cessation program – this is free to employees through Cigna with gum and patches at no extra cost\*

Facebook page (GS Strong – Building a Better You) – we offer workout options, EAP updates, recipes, safety, etc.

100% reimbursement for Weight Watchers when employee reaches 80% participation with substantiating data\*

Wellness committee that meets every 3 months to discuss and implement initiatives made up of employees from all levels of the company

\*Applies Only To US Locations



## RICHARD DENNY FINDS SWEET SPOT WITH MULTI-FAMILY DWELLINGS IN URBAN SETTINGS

As National Accounts Manager, Richard Denny's job can sometimes be as diverse as the country is wide. One of the tasks recently assigned to Denny was to rekindle relationships with distributors, while at the same time getting an "in" with production builders. There's a heavy focus on Millennials in this area.

"Millennials want something close to downtown where they can walk to places, and they don't really want to own a home," says Denny. "They want to go where there's Internet, coffee shops and retail."

Denny says a growing trend is Multi-Family Developers. And he's found an interesting way to break into that market through a "Multi-Family Exchange."

Denny describes it as speed-dating for the multi-family development community. It's a place where builders, suppliers, managers and investors can all be in the same location to talk about projects. It's usually held in conference centers in places like Florida, Las Vegas or New Orleans.

What Denny brought to the table was his vast knowledge about brick suppliers around the country.

"I position myself as the expert and I'll put the whole deal together for them," he explains. "If they go to Dallas, where we don't have distribution, I'll tell them who they should work with. But if it's in our back yard, it's going to be us. I set them up with masonry contractors, tell them what size brick is best in that market, negotiate pricing for General Shale product, and, if needed, put them in touch with one of our reps."

"It's a totally a different way of marketing, selling and even delivering our product," he continues. "What we call the 'Urban Infill' is very popular. When you are building a four-story, \$500,000 project, there's no space—so where do you put all the brick? We've come up with a delivery system where the truck pulls up and a crane picks up the product and lifts it to where it needs to go right then. There are two cubes on one pallet and each one is individually shrink-wrapped, then also wrapped together for less breakage."

Denny calls it a "high-volume/low-margin" situation.

In the end, General Shale is shipping directly to the job site and selling millions of bricks, and all parties involved are satisfied with a deal that may have been struck months earlier in a conference room thousands of miles away.



# TELEHEALTH NOW AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES

Telehealth is a new benefit added to the General Shale medical options for 2017.

Employees in the U.S. who are enrolled in the General Shale medical plan now have access to Telehealth, which allows a secure video chat or a phone call with a board-certified doctor for minor health issues. These services are available 24/7/365.

Telehealth can help treat minor conditions such as sore throat, headache, stomachache, fever, cold, flu, allergies, rash, acne, UTIs and more. If antibiotics or other medications are deemed necessary, you can let the doctor know which pharmacy you use and he or she will send the prescription there to be filled.

Benefits Manager Alison Kestner says, "This is such a nice benefit. It can keep you out of waiting rooms, especially during cold and flu season, and get you on the road to recovery more quickly."

Employees are urged to register for this service now, so that you will have it when you need it.



# THE CARE YOU NEED – WHEN, WHERE AND HOW YOU NEED IT.

Introducing Cigna Telehealth Connection.



## Choice is good. More choice is even better.

Now Cigna provides access to **two** telehealth services as part of your medical plan – **AmWell** and **MDLIVE**.

Cigna Telehealth Connection lets you get the care you need – including most prescriptions – for a wide range of minor conditions. Now you can connect with a board-certified doctor via secure video chat or phone, without leaving your home or office. When, where and how it works best for you!

**Choose when:** Day or night, weekdays, weekends and holidays.

**Choose where:** Home, work or on the go.

**Choose how:** Phone or video chat.

**Choose who:** AmWell or MDLIVE doctors.

Say it's the middle of the night and your child is sick. Or you're at work and not feeling well. If you pre-register on both AmWell and MDLIVE, you can speak with a doctor for help with:

- › sore throat
- › fever
- › rash
- › headache
- › cold and flu
- › acne
- › stomachache
- › allergies
- › UTIs and more

## The cost savings are clear.

Televisits with AmWell and MDLIVE can be a cost-effective alternative to a convenience care clinic or urgent care center, and cost less than going to the emergency room. And the cost of a phone or online visit is the same or less than with your primary care provider. Remember, your telehealth services are only available for minor, non-life threatening conditions. In an emergency, dial 911 or go to the nearest hospital.



AmWell and MDLIVE are only available for medical visits. For covered services related to mental health and substance abuse, you have access to the **Cigna Behavioral Health** network of providers.

- › Go to **Cignabehavioral.com** to search for a video telehealth specialist
- › Call to make an appointment with your selected provider

Telehealth visits with Cigna Behavioral Health network providers cost the same as an in-office visit.

**Together, all the way.®**



Offered by: Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company or their affiliates.

# SAFETY SHORTCUTS NOT WORTH IT IN THE LONG RUN



A carpenter who uses duct tape to reattach a hammer head, or a painter who ties himself to a roof ladder with a piece of rope, or a worker in a warehouse who stands on a stack of boxes instead of a ladder all have one thing in common: they are using makeshift solutions.

Makeshift solutions, by definition, offer us quick fixes to our problems. Makeshift problems occur with tools as well as personal protective equipment. Examples include opting for hiking boots instead of steel-toed work boots on the job site, or using gardening gloves instead of required work gloves. Using makeshift equipment and wearing the incorrect PPE increase your chances of getting injured on the job.

Ever hear the saying, “duct tape is a person’s best friend”? Here’s an example of what can happen when using this quick solution: A carpenter tried to reattach the head of his hammer to the handle using his “best friend” — duct tape. When the head of the hammer came flying off, he suffered a broken thumb and worse: a head injury.

If we are honest with ourselves, we can all remember a time when we used a makeshift solution. While variations in makeshift solutions are limited only by the creativity of humans, the reasons we use them are few. Two of the most common reasons are saving time and saving money.

## **Saving time**

This is a concept you have to put into perspective. Whose time are you saving? Are you really saving time? After a while, your use of a makeshift solution increases your risk of injury. The odds are that if you suffer an injury, it will cost you working time. It will also likely cost the company production time. So you are really betting days, and even months, of your working life just to save a few minutes.

## **Saving money**

Sure, having the right tools and safety equipment can be costly. But if this is a makeshift solution, you’ll probably need a new tool or the right one tomorrow anyway. So where are the savings? And when you try to make do with faulty or improper safety equipment, you are really not doing anything other than risking your ability to work and be productive.

While it might look like you are saving time or saving money with a makeshift solution, chances are you are doing anything but saving. The reality is that you are throwing the dice, crossing your fingers and betting your life the duct tape won’t break.



## **MATT MARA PROMOTED TO RALEIGH DISTRICT SALES MANAGER**

Congratulations to Matt Mara on his new position of Raleigh District Sales Manager! This promotion came about upon the retirement of Bill Marceron.

Matt brings a wealth of industry experience and Raleigh, N.C., knowledge. He started his career with Lawrenceville Brick, working in Quality Control, then moved into sales. He also spent several years at Triangle Brick before coming to General Shale. Unfortunately, at that time, General Shale’s focus was on residential sales, and Matt had a passion for architectural and commercial projects, which led him to Cunningham Brick.

Over the years, General Shale continued to expand its vision to include architectural sales through the acquisition of Arriscraft and the purchase of the Cunningham brick plant. The latter brought Matt back to General Shale, and he has been a key employee in helping the company understand and grow commercial sales ever since. Given Matt’s career focus on architectural sales, the Raleigh district will benefit greatly from his leadership. General Shale is focused on this market segment and Raleigh has an opportunity for growth.

Masonry is in Matt’s family, going back to a grandfather who built beehive kilns, a great-grandfather who mined clay for a brick company, and another great-grandfather who was a stone mason.

Matt and his wife Teresa live in Raleigh and have three kids: Alie, a student at Brody Medical School; Christina, a student at North Carolina State University; and Zach, who starts college this year.

Matt is an avid woodworker and spends time in his shop whenever he can to build furniture.





# GENERAL SHALE WORK ANNIVERSARIES

General Shale recognizes its employees celebrating work anniversaries each quarter. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the company.

Special recognition goes to those employees celebrating 40 or more years of service within the General Shale Family. This quarter, we have two Arriscraft employees celebrating 40 years each—**George Azevedo** and **Louis Freitas**.

## George Azevedo

George began his career with what was then Angel Stone (now Arriscraft) when he was 17. Born in Portugal, his family immigrated to Canada in 1971. Over the past 40 years, George has worked in several departments, beginning with the Marble Department, then moving on to Pressing, Molding, and Finishing, then Raw Materials. At that point, George approached management and took the next step to attain a leadership role. He worked in both Quality Control and Shipping while attending a manager training program.

Now, George is the Quarry Department supervisor. “I’ve worked everywhere,” George reflects. “It’s been a great place.” In addition, it has been a family affair, as George’s father, son and daughter have also worked for Arriscraft. “My children worked as they were going through university,” he says. “They were exposed to a strong company and very privileged to meet the owner personally.”

Over the years, George says he’s seen changes in a couple of areas. One, there’s not as much manual labor. And two, there’s more communication between employees and management.

“The biggest change is communication between employees and managers. It used to be ‘old school.’ There was no feedback,” he explains. “There’s a better relationship between employees and employer, and it makes things better. There’s more output, higher morale and more teamwork.”

George says he has no plans to retire anytime soon. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his kids, sailing, appreciating God’s beauty and—a little surprisingly—reading romance novels!



## Louis Freitas

Louis also began his career at Angel Stone as a teenager, at 19 years old.

And he also had a relative who worked at the plant—his brother. Louis began by working in the Finishing Department; he is now a line operator and lift truck operator.

“It was a good job, and at the time there weren’t a lot of jobs available. I was raising a family, so I needed to keep a steady job.” That steady job has lasted 40 years, through two sons and now two granddaughters.

Louis says that over the years he has been impressed with the company’s innovations. “They have been innovative and not afraid to try new products and colors. They’ve always wanted to please the customer, and it has always worked for us,” he says.

Louis is also chairman of the Work Council at his plant. He acts as a spokesperson and takes ideas, issues and suggestions to management. “The Work Council is one of the things that makes the company what it is,” Louis says.

Louis obviously feels Arriscraft is a good place to work. Both of his sons worked there while they were university students.

“You know what? I look back and I say, ‘where did the time go?’ It’s been very good, and the people have been great to work with. I’ll hopefully continue for a few more years,” Louis says.

Louis and his wife love to travel, so when he’s not working, he’s hitting the road. Most recently the couple enjoyed a Mediterranean cruise.



## Terry M. Beverly - Johnson City, TN - 30 years

NAME	LOCATION	YRS SVC
Angelia K. Wood	Piney Flats, TN	25
Ricky J. Norris	Piney Flats, TN	25
Terry D. Wright	Sanford, NC	25
Terry W. Tester Jr.	Charlotte, NC	20
Gilberto Espino-Perez	Denver, CO	20
Juan A. Gonzalez	Denver, CO	20
Colmer T. Clifton	Johnson City, TN	20
Kenneth J. McClaran	Johnson City, TN	20
Peter E. Proctor	Whitmore Lake, MI	15
Scott Parsons	Cambridge, Ontario	10
Jennifer Talluto	Denver, CO	10
Justin J. Grier	Denver, CO	10
Jessica A. Montgomery	Fort Valley, GA	10
Gregory B. Sturn	Fort Valley, GA	10
Roger W. Flinchum	Blue Ridge, VA	10
Keith Q. Colbert	Orland Park, IL	5
Raufeal A. Bostick	Fort Valley, GA	5
Luke B. Guinn	Johnson City, TN	5
Tammy D. Carter	Johnson City, TN	5
Patrick R. Pullen	Manassas, VA	5
David C. Coletta	Memphis, TN	5
Paul H. Elder	Raleigh, NC	5
Thomas M. Money	Denver, CO	5



# TOYS FOR TOTS PROGRAM A SPECIAL CAUSE FOR NAT MEDINA



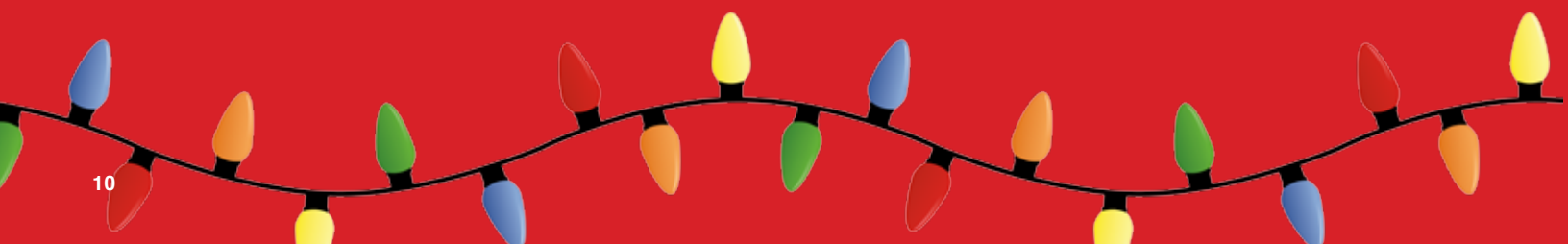
For three years, Manassas, Va., Operations Manager Nat Medina has spearheaded a United States Marine Corps Toys for Tots campaign. Toys for Tots' goal is to collect toys and distribute them to less fortunate children in the community.

Nat encouraged employees and customers throughout this past Christmas season to donate to this worthwhile cause, and he ended up collecting more than \$300 worth of toys for the program.

Before Nat came to work for General Shale in 2000, he had served for 30 years in the Marine Corps, retiring with the rank of Sergeant Major. While in the service, he participated in the program as one of the servicemen to distribute the toys. But his connection to the program goes back much further. As a child, Nat was a recipient of toys from the program.

"I can remember two people in blue uniforms," he recalls. "It was awesome, because we weren't well-to-do. In fact, had I not gotten those toys from the program, I wouldn't have had much of a Christmas."

Nat says nearly two dozen employees, and even some customers, donated toys for this year's drive. He says it's a great program and encourages all General Shale locations to take part. Visit [www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org) to find a participating base near you.





## 2017 FIRST QUARTER NEW PRODUCTS

### A LITTLE CHARACTER MAKES FOR LOTS OF DISTINCTION

#### INTRODUCING ASHER GREY BRICK

Our first new product of 2017, Asher Grey brick, is a great option for customers searching for an unassuming but beautiful exterior masonry finish for their new home. Similar to the widely popular Cape Lookout brick, also made at our Moncure, N.C., location, Asher Grey is defined by a dominant gray appearance that is nicely contrasted with splashes of dark brown and hints of creamy white. The end result is a beautiful Tudor brick that is ideal for residential projects that need a little character with lots of distinction. Asher Grey is available in lightweight engineered, lightweight queen and lightweight modular.



ASHER GREY BRICK



BRYCE CANYON BRICK



Gathering 75 Square Fire Pit



Entertainer 75 Round Fire Pit

### GATHER ROUND FOR NEW ENTERTAINMENT THIS SPRING

#### INTRODUCING THE GATHERING 75 AND ENTERTAINER 75 FIRE PITS

Some people like to kick back around a fire and just relax. If you're one of those people, and you're looking for a square fire pit for your outdoor space that is as simple as it is beautiful, the new Gathering 75 Square Fire Pit is a great choice! It has the same elegance as the Gathering Grill, only without the grill insert. The Gathering 75 can be assembled in a matter of hours with beginner-level building knowledge and will keep your outdoor living nights warm for years to come.

The Entertainer 75 Round Fire Pit has all the charm of the original but with a more rugged look and slightly easier setup. With even fewer parts to install, the Entertainer 75 can be assembled in just one afternoon. Not only will it keep your late-night hangouts warm, but it will also add beauty and value to your home.

### TWO NEW CANYON BRICK SERIES COLORS NOW AVAILABLE

#### INTRODUCING BRYCE CANYON AND COPPER CANYON BRICK

The appearance of clay brick goes beyond simply color. Part of what makes brick such a compelling building product is the character it provides through subtle color variations, but most notably its texture. While our selection of brick includes various texture options, perhaps none have captured the industry-unique look of the all-new Canyon Brick Series.

Canyon Brick contains sweeping, cavernous-like indentations that run beautifully along the face, echoing the organic look of natural canyon landmarks.

Bryce Canyon is the first Canyon Brick Series color from our Moncure, N.C., plant. Bryce Canyon's earthy brown body, which is highlighted with subtle cream-colored accents, makes this series' trademark face texture even more striking in appearance.

Bryce Canyon comes in lightweight engineered, lightweight modular and lightweight queen.



COPPER CANYON BRICK



General Shale  
@generalshale

- Home
- About
- Photos
- Likes
- Events
- Videos



Like Follow Share ... Learn More Message

Featured For You Product/Service

Like this Page to stay up to date Get in touch with General Shale

# GENERAL SHALE FACEBOOK PAGE GROWS AUDIENCE TO MORE THAN 20,000 LIKES

Facebook has become a vital tool for any company's marketing department, and General Shale is no different.

Marketing and Communications Specialist Luke Guinn is responsible for maintaining and monitoring General Shale's Facebook page. When he took over running the page in 2011, there were approximately 200 likes. As of Nov. 16, 2016, the page hit 20,000 likes, a number that continues to grow.

According to Facebook, more than 1.23 billion people log onto Facebook daily, which represents an 18% increase year over year. Luke is working hard to get as many of those as he can to like the General Shale Facebook page and interact.

"We use Facebook to communicate new products, existing product info, new colors and interesting things we are doing on a local level," Luke says. "We never want it to be just fluff or too sales-oriented."

And what he's doing is working. Luke tries to keep up with the latest social media trends, like Facebook Live. "Videos get the most engagement, and Facebook Live is really great when we have an event we can broadcast live, then the video gets archived and lives on the site for others to watch later," Luke explains.

Luke says that knowing the demographic of people on the company's Facebook page is important. He knows they are primarily from the U.S., but there are some international fans. Sixty percent are female and 40% are male.

Facebook isn't the only social media tool Luke uses. "We track all channels to see which ones are leading people back to the General Shale website and possibly converting into sales."

"We have to know what works for us. Our main ones are Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest," Luke points out. "Pinterest is huge for

us as far as website referral. It's one of the main directors back to our website. Rachael Vernon (Marketing and Communications Specialist) revamped our Pinterest page. She's done a great job with the boards. It's very robust."

Luke and Cindy Loosemore are also writing a blog, which is great for search engine optimization (having your website rank higher when someone searches a term like "brick") and redirects back to the main website.

"In less than a year, our blog has already reached number six on the list of top external sites that refer back to the website," says Luke.

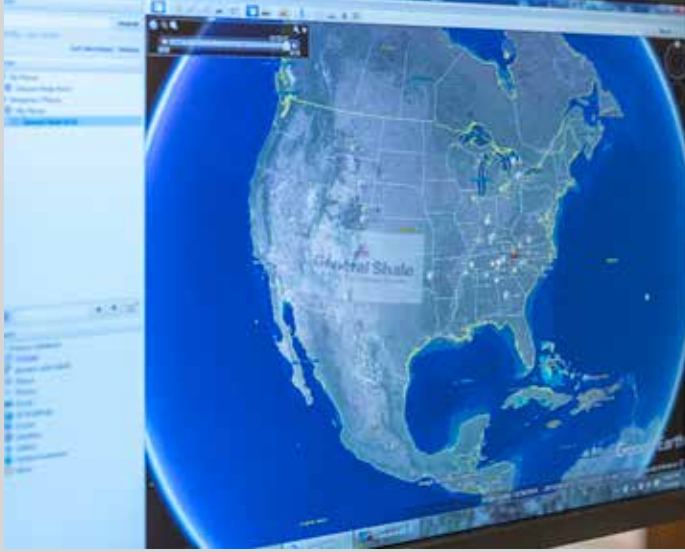
Luke and Cindy post about two blogs per month. Categories include:

- Brick tips
- Building inspiration
- Community
- Design ideas
- For professionals
- Outdoor living
- Product review
- What's new

The blog is delivered via email to a list of more than two thousand customers.

Luke's goals for social media include keeping those channels in the top 10 sites that refer back to the website. A "like," but becoming friends in real life can mean a long-term relationship with a customer.

# BEARDSLEY COMMUNITY FARM PROJECT WINS NATIONAL TEACHING AWARD



## GENERAL SHALE GEOLOGIST GETS RESOURCEFUL WITH GOOGLE EARTH

General Shale owns and operates dozens of mines across North America. And in the past, gathering and sharing information about those mines to the plants has been challenging.

Geographical Information Systems (GISs) are available—but they're nearly cost-prohibitive. That's why General Shale Geologist Tommy Scalf has been developing company usage of GIS-technology using Google Earth. Through this free service, Tommy has been able to communicate raw material reserve and test results in the mines with plant personnel through simple, emailed files.

Tommy's background is in GIS, so he knows its value and its expenses. He was going to the General Shale mines two or three times a year for testing and needed a way to communicate the results to the plants. Using Google Earth has been an economical solution.

"I'll use the template from Google Earth and overlay my test results, markers and other map indicators, save it in a secure file, and email it to the plants," explains Tommy. "It's great because Google Earth even updates their images through the years, so you can see how our mines have expanded or even reclamation efforts we've done at various sites."

This efficient, user friendly and inexpensive means of communicating characteristics of General Shale mine reserves to the plants will help ensure that General Shale is maximizing raw material quality and quantity to extend reserves as far as possible into the future.

Tommy is in the process of introducing this to plant management across all of the U.S. and Canada.



The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) has awarded Knoxville's Beardsley Community Farm project with a 2016-17 Architectural Education Award.



Each year, the ACSA honors architectural educators for exemplary work in areas such as building design, community collaborations, scholarship and service. Award winners inspire and challenge students, contribute to the profession's knowledge base, and extend their work beyond the borders of academy into practice and the public sector.

The Beardsley Community Farm won its award for innovation in collaborative practice. Three projects were honored in this category this year.

Founded in 1998, the farm is an urban nonprofit community farm that produces food for local hunger relief organizations and shelters. The education center was designed and largely constructed through the efforts of the University of Tennessee's College of Architecture and Design students and faculty. General Shale donated all of the brick and mortar used on the project.

"We're really delighted by this news," says Jennifer Akerman, Assistant Professor at the UT College of Architecture and Design. "I am so appreciative of the recognition of design excellence, innovation and collaboration, and also extremely grateful for everyone on the team who worked so hard and gave so much to make it happen."



# FOR THE LOVE OF BRICK AND TENNIS



It's not often that you'll hear someone say they've won a national athletic title, much less hear it at General Shale, and it's not something you'll hear Rick Rogers say often either, but he has.

Although humble about his accomplishments, the General Shale Accountants Payable supervisor is a tennis star!

He's a member of Kingsport's men's tennis team, representing the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Southern Section, which won the national title at the USTA League Adult 40 & Over 4.0 National Championships at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in California in 2013.



Although he won the national title a few years ago, he says he'll always cherish the memories—both the good and the bad.

"A big thing for me during this run to the national title is, after we won state and we were going to sectionals in Asheville, my father died the day before my match. That was tough, but my family reminded me that my dad would have wanted me to play, and I kept that in mind."

It was a special run. Rick was even the one (with his doubles teammate) who won the deciding match that clinched the title for his team.

Rick advises that it's never too late to start being active and says tennis is a great sport for anyone to pick up and continue playing. He says, "The father of one of my partners still plays at 95. I see people like that all the time."

Rick himself, although always an athlete, didn't start playing until his 30s and now has played for about 20 years. Remarkably, he's never had a lesson!

"It's great exercise and you can play forever," he says.

The USTA League has grown from 13,000 participants in a few parts of the country in its first year, to over 820,000 players across the nation today, making it the world's largest recreational tennis league.





# EMPLOYEES HELP RAISE AWARENESS OF HEART DISEASE IN WOMEN

More than two dozen people at the General Shale headquarters in Johnson City, Tenn., went “red” in February to raise awareness of heart disease in women.

Heart disease and stroke are the number one killers of women. The American Heart Association created Go Red for Women, a social initiative intended to empower women to take charge of their heart health.

Benefits Manager Alison Kestner, who helped organize the event at General Shale, says, “Everyone wears red in February in support of awareness for heart disease. It’s a cause General Shale supports, as we are also a sponsor for the Heart Walk and the Go Red for Women luncheon locally.”

According to the Go Red for Women campaign, the more a woman knows about heart disease, the better chance she has of beating it. Heart disease and stroke cause 1 in 3 deaths among women each year—more than all cancers combined. Fortunately, 80% of cardiac and stroke events may be prevented with education and action.

For more information on the signs of heart disease and preventive measures, visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org).



# iSABOR! CHICKEN ARTICHOKE SOUP



### INGREDIENTS

- 8 Tbsp. Butter, unsalted
- ½ C Spring Onions, chopped
- ½ C Celery, chopped
- 1/3 C Flour
- 2-3 (4.66 oz.) Chicken Homestyle Stock, reconstituted or 1 (14.5 Oz.) Chicken stock
- 1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning
- 2 (14 oz.) Artichoke Hearts, quartered, reserve liquid from 1 can
- 2-3 C Rotisserie chicken, skin removed, deboned and shredded
- 1 C Whipping Cream
- 2½ - 3 Tbsp. iSabor! by Texas Pete® Mexican-Style Hot Sauce

### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large stockpot, melt butter and sauté onions and celery until soft.
2. Whisk in flour then gradually add chicken stock continuing to whisk until blended.
3. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for at least one hour. Adjust seasoning if needed.
4. Serve hot.



## GENERAL SHALE THROWBACK MOMENT

Recognize these faces? Let us know; we'd love to hear the story behind this photo.

Do you have a throwback photo of your time at General Shale?  
Please share, and maybe we'll feature it in an upcoming newsletter. Send photos  
to [dawn.henning@generalshale.com](mailto:dawn.henning@generalshale.com)



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