

WARM WEATHER BRINGS OUT THE CREEPY CRAWLIES!

As we move into warmer weather, we will start to see more creepy crawlies and the hazards they present! Here are some good guidelines presented to us straight from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

INSECTS, SPIDERS AND TICKS

- To protect yourself from biting and stinging insects, wear long pants, socks and long-sleeved shirts.
- Use insect repellents that contain DEET or picaridin.
- Treat bites and stings with over-the-counter products that relieve pain and prevent infection.
- Avoid fire ants; their bites are painful and cause blisters. Severe reactions to fire ant bites (chest pain, nausea, sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech) require immediate medical treatment.

RODENTS AND WILD OR STRAY ANIMALS

- Dead and live animals can spread diseases such as rat-bite fever and rabies.
- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals.
- Avoid contact with rats or rat-contaminated buildings. If you can't avoid contact, wear protective gloves and wash your hands regularly.
- Get rid of dead animals as soon as possible.
- If you are bitten or scratched, get medical attention immediately.



SNAKES

- Watch where you place your hands and feet when removing debris. If possible, don't place your fingers under debris you are moving. Wear heavy gloves.
- If you see a snake, step back and allow it to proceed.
- Wear boots at least 10 inches high.
- Watch for snakes sunning on fallen trees, limbs or other debris.
- A snake's striking distance is about 1/2 the total length of the snake.
- If you are bitten, note the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment.
- Keep bite victims still and calm to slow the spread of venom in case the snake is poisonous. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom. Apply first aid: lay the person down so that the bite is below the level of the heart, and cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.



MESSAGE

FROM CHARLES SMITH,
PRESIDENT AND CEO

It is a great time to be part of the General Shale family. It has been several years since we have seen this kind of growth in sales combined with new interest from homeowners and building professionals in our products.

The key driver of this trend is the growth in new-home construction in many parts of the country. With a greater focus on giving new homes the added character and enduring beauty that only brick can offer, contractors are turning to our portfolio of residential clay brick products. Another encouraging factor is our new emphasis on including Arriscraft™ products into our sales discussions. Arriscraft is a wonderful complement to our brick offering, and our customers agree.

The addition of the Cleveland County Plant (CCP) has given General Shale a new entry into the commercial sector, which is also experiencing a rebirth, especially in major cities. As we further incorporate the CCP products into our portfolio, I project additional growth.

Our investment in new product innovation and additional lines during the past five years has given us important new products to fit the changing environment of our economy and the lifestyles of our end customers. We will continue to be a leader in both product and marketing innovation as we accelerate the delivery of our products to both the commercial and residential markets.

The Success Profile effort that saw so many of you contribute your ideas in the past few years is truly making a difference as we transition from being simply a product manufacturer to being a solutions provider. I urge you to continue to submit ideas; we need them to help us grow.

Thanks to all for your hard work. It is paying off.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Smith
President and CEO

Impressions

THE GENERAL SHALE EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

summer 2014



WE'RE REACHING THOUSANDS

This past April, General Shale reached 10,000 "likes" on the social media website Facebook.

The page has been active since 2010, but recently Marketing Communications Specialist Luke Guinn has made a push to be more effective with the posts on the site.

"We never wanted to be on Facebook just for the sake of being there," Guinn says. "A lot of companies are on there, but the voice isn't in the company's best interest. We want to give information that is of value to the customer."

Some of the content that Guinn posts are photos of new products, photos of homes that are built with General Shale brick, interesting facts about the brick industry and information about promotional events.

"I like to post far enough in advance of our events so that people can plan ... you typically don't just buy one of our products on a whim, so we give them time to research and prepare," Guinn says.

It's also used to post job opportunities that General Shale may have across the country. Guinn says that has two benefits: it helps General Shale find qualified candidates, but it also shows the company's large footprint across the U.S.

And Facebook is great for customer service.

"The great thing about Facebook is it helps us build high-touch customer service," Guinn says. "Our viewers have questions and they need answers quickly, and Facebook allows us



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to provide those solutions in real time.”

Facebook also allows General Shale to cross-promote with distributors, as status updates from customers can be shared.

Although it was not promoted prior to reaching the 10,000th fan on Facebook, that fan did receive recognition and a prize—a Gathering Grill outdoor fire pit. Guinn says more promotions and giveaways are planned for the future.

And although Facebook helps with search engine optimization, Facebook is not the main social media site for referrals to the company’s main website—Pinterest is.

“I think Pinterest is all about ideas, and much of it is for home-improvement projects. Our thin products and outdoor living products are really popular on Pinterest,” says Guinn.

General Shale also maintains a social media presence on Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

WHAT’S NEW WITH ARRISCRAFT™?



ARRISCRAFT™ BUILDING STONE INTRODUCES NEW LITERATURE

Adding to the Arriscraft library is the new-look residential brochure. The brochure provides an all-inclusive overview of the entire range of Arriscraft residential products, including three new products for 2014:

- ARRIS.stack (Fort Valley)
- Edge Rock Building Stone (Cambridge)
- Fresco Building Stone (Cambridge)

In addition to the items above, the ARRIS.stack flyer and photo samples of all eight ARRIS.stack colors have been updated.



ARRISCRAFT™ BUILDING STONE LAUNCHES NEW MOBILE WEBSITE

A new mobile site has been created for Arriscraft™ products that will help masons, builders and designers access comprehensive product information and technical tools wherever they go.

Marta Zonneveld, Marketing Manager, says, “Our focus is customer support. We have carefully developed key information and tools on a cross-platform mobile site that allows everyone access.”

The site contains mobile-specific content and tools and operates on Android®, BlackBerry® and iPhone® devices, including iPads® and other tablets.

The mobile website features a photo gallery, complete product overviews, technical installation guides and video links, a dealer locator, key literature, as well as a proprietary building stone calculator for estimating material requirements. Users can also quickly access Arriscraft’s social media accounts for the most current updates, news and events.

GENERAL SHALE NAMED SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR BY RYLAND HOMES



(Left to right): Doug Golden - Carmel Outside Sales Representative, Gary Rossman - District Sales Manager, David DeSplinter - Ryland V.P. of Purchasing

For the second year in a row, Ryland Homes of Indianapolis has named General Shale “Supplier of the Year.”

General Shale’s Carmel, Ind., location serves Ryland Homes, a national production builder with about 30 neighborhoods in and around Indianapolis. Gary Rossman, District Sales Manager and one of six employees at the Carmel office, says to have received the honor once was great, but two years in a row is really flattering.

“Every year they have a vendor meeting where they talk about the upcoming year and the forecast for them. They give four or five honors, including awards for safety and other aspects, but the highest honor is for Supplier of the Year,” says Rossman.

Ryland Homes builds nearly 600 houses a year in the central Indiana area. Homes range from \$170,000 to upward of \$600,000. Any company that supplies materials to Ryland Homes is eligible for the award—including electrical, lumber, doors, flooring, lighting—so there are numerous companies in the running for Supplier of the Year.

Rossman says the honor confirms General Shale is doing things right. “To me, this means our part of the building process is as seamless as possible. They order it, we get it to them on time and if there are any problems we take care of it timely and effectively.”

Steve Dean, VP of Construction at Ryland Homes, agrees. During the presentation, he noted, “The team at General Shale does a fantastic job of making sure we have our masonry products on time. If and when we have an issue with their product, their team does a great job of troubleshooting and providing solutions.”

Rossman says everyone in his office, from the sales staff to dispatchers and deliverers, helped earn this honor. “This award is not by accident, but because of the conscious drive by the entire Carmel staff to provide excellent customer service.” Rossman adds, “I am proud of the professional service our employees provide not only Ryland, but all our Indianapolis customers.”

The announcement was made at a meeting with Ryland Homes executives on May 8.

BRICK AS ART



When you think of brick, you most likely think of the rectangular building material we all know and love. But before brick is fired and hardened, it's made from pliable clay that can be formed into any shape ... and can even be used to create art.

The use of brick as sculptured art is a centuries-old tradition. But when the idea was first introduced to Johnny Hagerman, it opened his eyes to possibilities he'd never imagined.

That was some 30 years ago, and now Hagerman is one of the country's foremost brick sculptors, and he's creating hundreds of intricate shapes for General Shale.

Hagerman was an art teacher at a small school in the Appalachian region of Southwest Virginia when he first saw how brick could be used as art.

"I was aware that brick was made out of clay, of course, but it just amazed me how this material was used to create these amazing sculptures," Hagerman says. "I thought it was so wonderful."

Hagerman soon had his art class working with the material. Any clay that was left over he experimented with on his own time as well.

"It was primitive, but so satisfying. It became a challenge to get better at this medium," Hagerman remembers. "I'm pretty much self-taught by mistakes."

Eventually Hagerman did get better, much better in fact, and started working part time for General Shale in the 1980s creating murals for the company that included animals, landscape scenes and more. He decided he'd found his true calling and resigned from teaching to create brick murals full time under General Shale's Masonart® brand.

The possibilities of what Hagerman can create are nearly unlimited. His designs add dimension, uniqueness and beauty to any home or commercial business. One of his favorite designs can be seen at the Opryland Resort in Nashville, Tenn.

"I got to meet Roy Acuff, and that was a really neat thing," he recalls. Another favorite hits closer to home and is prominently displayed at the Southwest Virginia Community College.

"It's a carving of some ancient pictographs found in a cave near my childhood home (Tazewell County, Va.). It's a view of Paint Lick Mountain and a stream, and replicas of the ancient pictographs and mountain and a stream. I really enjoyed doing that one."

Hagerman says working for General Shale has been a privilege because the company truly supports his work and the arts in general.

"I love this medium," Hagerman concludes. "A good day is when you have no idea how much time you've spent working and can't believe it's already time to go home. I have a lot of days like that."





New Products

2ND Quarter
2014

At General Shale, we are proud to be constantly innovating and coming up with new products to offer our customers.



WAKE MANOR BRICK NOW AVAILABLE!

On the heels of announcing two new brick products from our Denver plant, we are excited to introduce yet another new brick product—Wake Manor!

Available to all markets, Wake Manor carries a look reminiscent of our Old Williamsburg brick. With its traditional red color and distressed, tumbled character, this new brick offers an “old town” aesthetic that is popular right now in new residential construction projects. If you have questions about Wake Manor, please contact Bill Marceron, District Sales Manager, Raleigh, N.C. For pricing information, please contact your regional or district sales manager.

WAKE MANOR

NEW UPDATES TO THE RETREAT GARDEN BENCH & GATHERING GRILL!

From time to time, products are updated based on a number of factors, ranging from consumer/market feedback to technical improvements. The most recent updates have been applied to a set of outdoor living products:

- The Retreat Garden Bench now features a gray, concrete bench seat that seamlessly matches other DIY kits such as the Cantina 100 Bar as well as the Alfresco Kitchen Series countertops.
- The Gathering Grill now features a stainless steel insert that is resistant to the outdoor elements, preventing rust from occurring over time. A new, galvanized steel charcoal pan has also been added.

New outdoor living literature will be available soon that will feature these new updates. Please stay tuned for that announcement coming in the next few weeks. If you have any questions about these changes, please contact Mike Hillman, Regional Sales Manager.



The Retreat Garden Bench

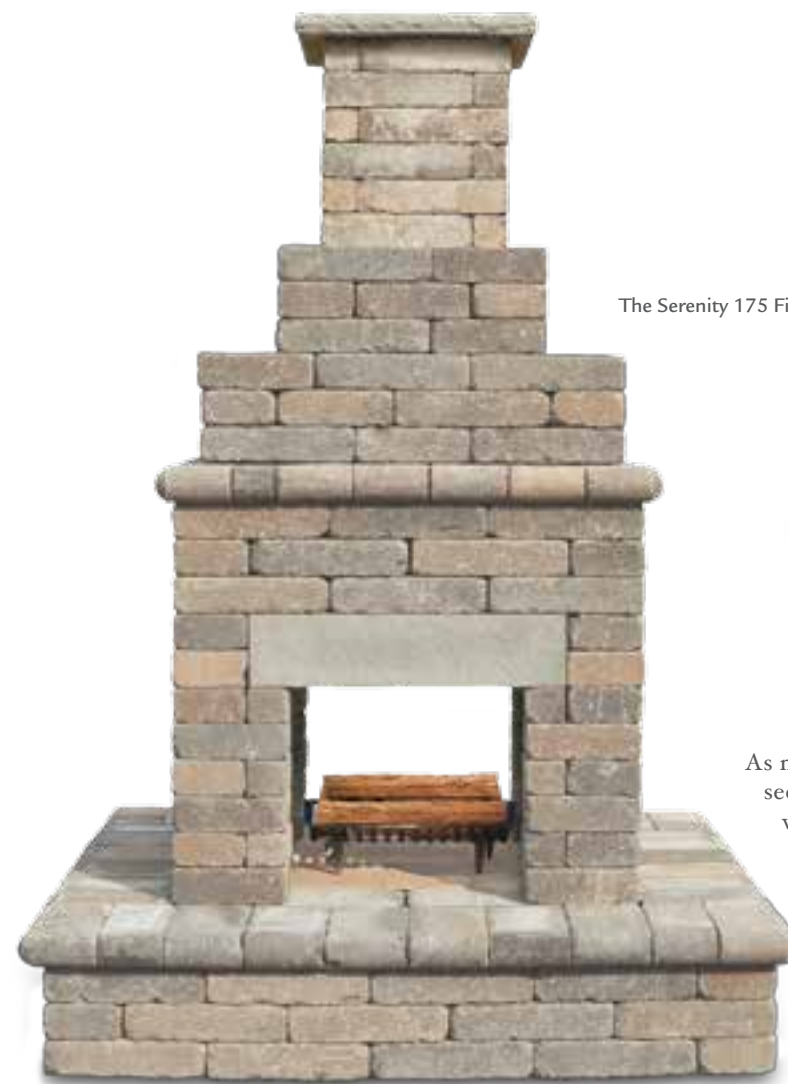


The Gathering Grill

INTRODUCING THE SERENITY 175 FIREPLACE!

Just in time for the prime months of the outdoor living season, we are excited to reveal an all-new DIY kit to the outdoor living products line. Introducing the Serenity 175 Fireplace!

The Serenity 175 provides customers with an outdoor fireplace option unlike any other! The hearth runs along the entire perimeter of the fireplace, creating great decorating opportunities. In addition to its striking appearance, the “see-through” feature creates new placement options within outdoor living spaces.



The Serenity 175 Fireplace



As mentioned, the most notable aspect of the Serenity 175 is the see-through feature, unique to our line of Serenity fireplaces. This very idea came from an employee suggestion through the Success Profile program, demonstrating the exciting opportunity it presents for employees to have their ideas not only heard but implemented into a great product! In this case, Christie Akers and Greg Spry in Roanoke, VA., submitted this excellent idea!

Note: Initial stock of the Serenity 175 will be limited.

Material Information

NAME	ITEM #	DIMENSIONS	DIFFICULTY	SKU
Serenity 175	FPL-175	5'10"W x 5'3"D x 8'10"H (approx.)	Intermediate	6058030586

NEW SUCCESS PROFILE TEAM PROFILED

There have been many success stories from General Shale's implementation of the Success Profile initiative. As we begin the fiscal year with new team leaders, we will be profiling each committee head and highlighting some of their goals for the upcoming year.



**LEADER IN ENERGY
EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGY**



**BUILDING WITH A
CLEAR CONSCIENCE**



**EXPERT FOR BUILDING
PROFESSIONALS**



HIGH TOUCH



**MODERN &
FUTURE-ORIENTED**



**TECHNOLOGICAL
LEADER**



VALUE PRICING

VALUE PRICING'S NEW TEAM LEADER—DAVID GILMORE, AREA SALES MANAGER



David Gilmore says he believes one of the reasons he was appointed leader of this committee is because of his prior sales experience outside of the brick industry. His unique insight should be helpful in bringing a different point of view to the idea of "value pricing," he says.

"In this industry, we are focused on pricing our products based on internal costs, and to a certain extent we consider market comparison. But we don't spend a lot of time priding ourselves on what we do well and creating a perception of why our products should cost a little more," Gilmore states.

He gives an example of a large job for which General Shale's thin brick product wasn't initially chosen. Instead of conceding that yes, brick is more expensive than the cheaper alternative, in this case tile, he spent some time with the potential client explaining how General Shale's thin brick is made. He emphasized the extensive production process that thin brick goes through before it's cut, and that it's actually a real clay brick product. Gilmore said in the end the client said he didn't realize the difference and he ended up purchasing thin brick even though it increased the cost of his project.

"He walked away with a perception of value," Gilmore explains. "And that's way more important than price."

One goal Gilmore has for the committee is to complete a survey of General Shale's customers on what's important to them in the products they buy, excluding price. Then he'll match what's on the list to what General Shale does well as a toolbox of points to emphasize when talking to customers.

"Every month after the survey I'd like to send out something as a reminder of this month's focus. It might be builders, who love service, and this is what General Shale does that is above and beyond typical service," Gilmore says.

Gilmore says, overall, he wants to create a culture of knowledge where the knee-jerk reaction isn't always about price, but value.

MODERN AND FUTURE-ORIENTED'S NEW TEAM LEADER— STEPHANIE BULLOCK, INSIDE SALES REPRESENTATIVE



Stephanie Bullock has met with her mentor, previous team leader Dawn Henning, to come up with three goals they want to accomplish this year.

The first is to evaluate our showrooms across the country and create a plan to update areas that are needed. "In some cases we still have old literature, pictures and products on display," Bullock says. "There are so many new products we have, and our showrooms need to reflect our progress and new products."

Showrooms will also highlight the recently acquired Cleveland County Plant and new outdoor living products that are great sellers in retail.

Also, Bullock says, they need to get updated marketing material to the distributors. "You want them to have the most updated information on the product. In order to grow your business you have to keep customers updated on products."

And third, Bullock would like to see improved email blasts internally that inform others in the company about new products to keep everyone current on features and benefits of both new products or any improvements to existing products.

As with every group, the Modern and Future-Oriented team wants to increase suggestions.

"We got lots of suggestions at the beginning, but that's trickled off a bit. We want to rekindle that creative spark. Most of the ideas that we get are usually very good ideas—we'd just like to get more," Bullock says.

Bullock adds, "With technology changing so quickly, it is a challenge to keep up with everything that is new. That's a big reason input from employees is important. They may know of something that's available that I don't."

GENERAL SHALE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



General Shale's annual Managers Meeting will have a new name going forward—next year it'll be called the Leadership Conference.

This past April's meeting was the first with new CEO Charles Smith at the helm.

The meeting is a chance for plant managers, district and regional sales managers, department directors and vice presidents to meet to review and reflect on the past year as well as to make plans for the future.

Dan Green, Director of Manufacturing, says this year's meeting was packed full of valuable time spent with peers.

"In the morning session, everyone was together and the different corporate departments gave an overview of what's happening in their areas, and updated everyone on any changes in policy or direction from their departments," Green explained. "Then in the afternoon we split up production and sales and had more in-depth discussions about things that pertain to those areas—things like safety, ordering supplies for production, new products and marketing materials for sales."

John Hammett, Vice President of Sales, says, "There are several benefits to the meeting. It's good to get everyone together face to face; with a company spread out across North America, connecting in person is always a good thing. Also it's a great time to get information on each of the departments. And finally the fellowship is a huge part of it. Everyone can reflect on their experiences. Sharing things that are working for them is important."

Smith says, "Having a meeting like this at the beginning of the year is important. It not only allows everyone to start the year off on the same page, but it also allows us to set expectations face to face. The meeting in April was a success for everyone; we all walked away with a lot of good information and knew what was needed to be successful this year. I think we also let



everyone in the field know they are not alone; we are all here as their support system and should they need help all they need to do is call."

The Managers Meeting was held the first week of April at Johnson City's DoubleTree Hotel.

GS STRONG – WELLNESS UPDATE

GS STRONG IS ON FACEBOOK!

Like us at www.facebook.com/gstrongprogram.



GS STRONG
building a better YOU!

Live like no one is watching.



GS Strong – Building A Better You
29 likes

Like Follow Message

Company

The official Facebook page for General Shale's Wellness Program – "GS Strong; building a better YOU!" is available to help General Shale employees and their families meet their health and wellness goals.



29

Photos

Likes

REIMBURSEMENTS—HEALTH CLUB FACILITIES/CLASSES

As of April 1, 2014, you may be eligible to receive quarterly reimbursement for a portion of your health club/gym memberships, as well as stand-alone classes (Pilates, Yoga, Zumba, Tai Chi, Karate, Taekwondo, etc.).

General Shale will reimburse 35% of the monthly membership/participation fee to active employees provided the following guidelines are met (reimbursements will be processed through the regular payroll process):

Health Club/Gym Memberships

- Employee is required to provide documentation from the facility to verify the monthly membership fee (individual membership only).
- Employee is required to have at least 15 visits (1 per day) to the facility each month.
- Employee must provide documentation from the facility to verify monthly attendance.

Wellness/Stand-Alone Classes

- Employee is required to provide documentation from the facility to verify the total amount paid for classes each month (individual fee only).
- Employee is required to provide documentation from the facility that verifies class schedule for the month.
- Employee is required to attend at least 50% of the scheduled classes per month. [Ex.: if a Zumba class is available 3 times per week (12 times per month), employee must attend at least 6 sessions during the month. Consideration will be given based on employee's access to classes. Employee is not penalized for those classes offered during the employee's regularly scheduled work hours].
- Employee is required to provide documentation from the facility that verifies attendance/participation in the class.

You must satisfy the above monthly requirements for the entire quarter. Reimbursements will not be prorated.

If you have questions, contact the Human Resources/Benefits Department.

WEIGHT WATCHERS RANKED #1 BEST PLAN FOR WEIGHT LOSS BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT FOR FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW



Weight Watchers once again reigns supreme in the 2014 Best Diets rankings from U.S. News & World Report, earning the top spot in three categories—Best Plan for Weight Loss, Best Commercial Plan and Easiest Plan to Follow.

Weight Watchers was also the highest-ranked commercial diet in the "Best Diets for Healthy Eating" category. An independent panel of 22 diet and nutrition experts found that the flexibility of Weight Watchers and the fact that no foods were off limits were big perks of the program.

The 2014 Best Diets review also gives Weight Watchers top ranking again in Best Plan for Weight Loss, Easiest Plan to Follow and Best Commercial Plan categories.

General Shale currently sponsors on-site Weight Watchers "@ Work" meetings for active employees and spouses. If your location is interested in holding on-site meetings, contact the Human Resources Department for additional information. Weight Watchers requires a minimum of 15 participants to conduct the on-site meetings.

EMPLOYEE PROMOTIONS

General Shale would like to congratulate these employees on their recent promotions. We'd like to express our appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the company. It's because of loyal employees like these that General Shale is the company it is today. Please congratulate them on their success.

