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**More Than Just a Brick Company:
General Shale's New Products Align with Consumer Trends**

Outdoor Living Space is One of Top Three Requirements for Homebuyers

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. — As housing trends turn to more casual styles and expanded outdoor living areas, consumers are increasingly incorporating those preferences into their building and remodeling projects. Responding to industry demand, **General Shale** – the North American subsidiary of Wienerberger AG and a leading manufacturer of brick, one of the world's oldest green building materials – now offers outdoor living products alongside its comprehensive line of brick and masonry supplies.

With the arrival of spring, many homeowners have started tackling exterior home-improvement projects, resulting in increased demand for outdoor living items.

Recognized as the nation's leading manufacturer of brick and masonry products for 84 years, General Shale's expanded product line now includes numerous choices in thin brick and thin rock for interior or exterior recladding projects, as well as popular outdoor living items such as fireplaces, fire pits, pizza ovens, benches, water features, mailboxes, clay and concrete pavers, landscaping stones and more. Many products are available in do-it-yourself kits that simplify design and installation.

Outdoor living space was one of the top three most-requested items by homebuyers in 2011, and marketing data reflect that trend:

- The National Association of Home Builders estimates that an outdoor living area provides more than a 130-percent return on investment, and most homes in the U.S. are expected to have some type of outdoor feature by 2015.
- Industry analysts suggest that consumers are now more likely to invest in creating a customized "vacation experience" in their back yard, adding permanent value to their home, instead of spending money on expensive trips.
- A recent Harvard report predicts remodeling expenditures to rise at an inflation-adjusted annual average of 3.5 percent through 2015.

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“As styles change and trends evolve, consumers look for creative, affordable ways to customize their outdoor living areas,” says General Shale President and CEO Dick Green. “Our showrooms feature a wide variety of choices displayed in realistic settings to provide inspiration and ideas for homeowners and professionals involved in construction and landscaping projects.”

The general public may purchase all products directly, including outdoor living selections and thin veneer products, and all products are the same professional-grade materials used by building contractors and landscaping companies.

About General Shale

General Shale is America’s largest brick, stone and concrete block manufacturer, supplying a wide variety of masonry materials for residential, commercial and specialty architectural projects. These materials include brick, thin veneers, stone, outdoor living kits and various building materials. There are more than 250 distinct combinations of sizes, colors and textures to complete any building project. With a life cycle of more than 100 years, the sustainability of brick is the company’s commitment to responsible stewardship.

Throughout the U.S. and Canada, General Shale operates manufacturing facilities in nine states and provinces, in addition to a network of 32 distribution centers across the country. General Shale was founded in 1928 and is headquartered in Johnson City, Tenn. For more information, visit www.generalshale.com.

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