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## **Habitat for Humanity of Tuscaloosa Building First-Ever All-Brick House**

### ***Oversized specialty bricks to provide stronger resistance to high winds***

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — At the latest build site for Habitat for Humanity of Tuscaloosa, something new is taking shape.

The affiliate is constructing its first-ever all-brick house, using General Shale's revolutionary Endurance RS4™ Structural Brick.

General Shale is the North American subsidiary of Wienerberger AG and a leading manufacturer of brick, one of the world's oldest green building materials.

Oversized for safer and stronger construction, Endurance is designed to bear higher loads, meet seismic requirements, and offer greater resistance to high winds and tornadic events.

That is a welcome thought in a region still recovering from 2011's super outbreak, when a mile-and-a-half-wide EF4 tornado ripped through Tuscaloosa and Birmingham. That event, and the extreme weather occurrences which followed, initiated an ongoing review of building standards and close scrutiny of materials in new construction.

"We wanted to develop a brick that performs very highly in terms of energy efficiency, sustainability and durability, and Endurance Brick exceeds our expectations," says General Shale President and CEO Charles Smith. "When compared to traditional brick products, Endurance has significant advantages. This innovative product helps streamline the construction process and extends the lifespan of structures. It's ideal for residences in regions that are prone to significant weather events and other natural disasters, as well as for essential buildings, such as hospitals, schools, courthouses, and fire and police stations."

Designed as reinforced masonry units, Endurance RS4™ Structural Brick eliminates the need for load-bearing wood or steel framing, providing structural efficiency that is also stronger than traditional masonry, which is reassuring for builders and homeowners in locations that are susceptible to tornadoes, such as Tuscaloosa.

“We’re very excited to see this house come together,” says Ellen Potts, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Tuscaloosa. “In the past we’ve been able to offer certain brick elements in homes, but this is the first honest-to-goodness brick house we’ve ever built. I know it will provide additional peace of mind for the homeowner, whose residence suffered substantial wind damage in the 2011 tornado. We’re grateful to General Shale for their contribution of Endurance Brick, and look forward to handing over the keys to the homeowner at our upcoming dedication ceremony.”

The all-brick house is expected to be completed and the dedication ceremony held in early April 2016.

### **ABOUT GENERAL SHALE**

General Shale is one of North America’s largest brick, stone and concrete block manufacturers, supplying a wide variety of masonry materials for residential, commercial and specialty architectural projects. These materials include brick, thin veneers, stone, outdoor living kits, concrete block and various building materials, which include Arriscraft Stone Products. The company offers an endless array 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 more than 40 retail showrooms and over 300 affiliated distributors across North America. In 1999, General Shale grew even stronger when it joined Wienerberger AG of Vienna, Austria, the world’s largest brick manufacturer.

General Shale was founded in 1928 and is headquartered in Johnson City, Tennessee. For more information, visit [www.generalshale.com](http://www.generalshale.com).

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