

EnergyMark leaders say businesses should be snapping up energy subsidies



Gary Marchiori, president of EnergyMark



By Dan Miner

Some important elements of EnergyMark's business changed over the last 10 months.

The Williamsville-based energy supplier saw consumption drop in industrial and commercial segments. Plus its sponsorship deal as "official energy supplier" of the Buffalo Bills had to be reworked, given absence of fans at home games.

But one aspect that has come on strong is the renewable energy market, according to Gary Marchiori, firm president, and his son Luke, executive vice president.

Changes in the way utilities bill renewable energy tax credits have made them significantly more attractive to businesses over the last year or so, they said.

"What's happened is that there is now a more simplified ability for users to subscribe to community solar and take advantage of the credits," Gary Marchiori said.

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First, a review: Community solar farms have sprung up throughout New York state in recent years on the back of a generous subsidy program – part of the state’s goal to hasten renewable energy adoption.

Once those projects are up and running, residential and business energy users can opt to take advantage of tax credits created by the project for a 10% savings on their bill.

In the past, those tax credits were applied through a clunky series of bills and rebates. But across the state, utility billing procedures have caught up, and now it’s just a 10% savings on the final bill.

For business customers, that can mean tens of thousands of dollars per year.

“When we tell people about community solar, a lot of times they ask, “What’s the catch?” Luke Marchiori said. “There really isn’t one, other than the fact that they’ve been paying into this.”

He is referring to the System of Benefits Charge and the Renewable Portfolio Standard, charges on the bill of every New York state energy consumer, which funds the [New York State Energy Research and Development Agency’s](#) programs.

The Marchioris point out that natural gas remains the dominant energy source in New York state, a fact that is unlikely to change any time soon.

“We have made a huge turn the last 10 years from coal to natural gas in the state,” Gary Marchiori said. “Wind and solar are still in the single digits of contribution to electric grid demand, so (natural gas) will remain a critical resource that will be relied upon.”

But renewable energy will still be a growing part of the EnergyMark business going forward. The first community solar project the company co-developed – on 54 acres of underutilized land on the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) – is set to come online sometime this year.