

Luke Marchiori pouring his energy into WNY blockchain industry



Luke Marchiori is an EnergyMark executive who is heavily involved in bitcoin mining projects.

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By [Dan Miner](#) – Reporter, Buffalo Business First

Blockchain projects are popping up with increasing frequency in Western New York, and one local energy executive is on the ground floor of that transition.

Luke Marchiori, executive vice president of Williamsville-based EnergyMark, has been personally interested in blockchain for a few years.

That was especially true as his family's industry – EnergyMark is an electric and natural gas supplier – became intertwined with the future of blockchain.

Blockchain is a high-tech system for storing data. It is also extremely energy intensive, as it runs on server farms performing complex mathematical computations.

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Last year, Marchiori was named chief renewable energy officer of Digihost, a Toronto-based company. Digihost already has one mining operation up and running at the American Axle factory in Buffalo and is awaiting state approval on another one at a former natural gas factory in North Tonawanda.

Marchiori said his goal is to help the company be a complement to the community.

“These are sophisticated operations that can stimulate growth here,” he said. “If you do them responsibly and sustainably, it can be a great thing for the region.”

Blockchain mining operations have been controversial for their immense energy usage. The site in North Tonawanda has run afoul of neighbors for potential noise and environmental concerns.

Marchiori said his advisory role at Digihost is to tie the company’s cutting-edge industry to a mission of environmental stewardship. The company is branding those collective efforts as its DigiGreen initiative.

The American Axle site, for instance, is set to purchase all electricity through a new solar panel project and the state’s community solar program. The program seeks to incentivize the renewable energy marketplace, giving users a 10% break on their electricity bill if they buy through a specific solar project.

He said the goal in North Tonawanda is to use renewable natural gas created through landfills and farming. If approved by the state Public Service Commission, that site will begin by using 50% of its electricity through renewable natural gas, with the goal of increasing that number in the future.

Digihost participates in the state's Demand Response Program, which helps manage the load on the electrical grid. It has also signed onto the Crypto Climate Accord, a collective pledge to achieve net-zero emissions from electricity consumption.

Marchiori’s own firm – owned by his father, Gary Marchiori – has been peeking into the future of renewable energy for several years now. EnergyMark co-developed a community solar project on 54 acres of underutilized land on the **West Valley Nuclear Demonstration Project**, and actively seeks to partner with other solar projects to help market the energy credits they create.

Just as EnergyMark has followed consumers and government policies to renewable energy, Marchiori says there is a recognition that bitcoin miners must build sustainability into their business models. They are at the whim, after all, of the communities where they reside.

“There’s a stigma surrounding this industry that should be a positive,” he said. “These are large users of power and clean electricity is a big focus.”