



# THOUGHT LEADERS

## ENERGY

*Leaders in the WNY energy sector assess the impact of green initiatives*



ALL PHOTOS: JOED VIERA

Ronald Tanski, National Fuel Gas president and CEO, makes a point to Adam Stotz, left, Gary Marchiori and Kevin Neumaier. The panelists, including Paul Tyno, below, discussed the impact of energy initiatives on the Buffalo area. The Thought Leaders panel took place at Hodgson Russ LLP.



BY DAN MINER  
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It's a brave new world for entrepreneurs, investors and executives in the energy world.

Changes in consumer preferences, regulatory frameworks and technology have created a vast network of challenges and opportunities.

The pace and scale of renewable-energy adoption is a forceful dynamic, especially as New York state's policy framework seeks a rapid shift away from fossil-fuel sources.

"We have a reliable grid right now," said Gary Marchiori, president

of EnergyMark, a Williamsville-based energy marketing firm. "We have to be concerned about reliability while also embracing renewables in New York which bring issues such as taxes and land use."

EnergyMark makes for an interesting case study about the state's energy industry. The company has a traditional business that focuses on sourcing natural gas for commercial interests, but it is newly focused on finding takers for energy credits created by state-subsidized solar projects.

Marchiori said his company has been approached by dozens of small-

with GARY MARCHIORI, KEVIN NEUMAIER,  
ADAM STOTZ, RONALD TANSKI and PAUL TYNO

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ATTORNEYS



*“I see a different world in five years. I see hundreds of 5-megawatt solar projects. It is non-energy people, though. They are investment communities.”*

**GARY MARCHIORI**,  
president, EnergyMark



*“We’re all about renewable energy and we think we are one of the most impactful solutions because methane has a much greater carbon equivalency than CO2.”*

**KEVIN NEUMAIER**,  
managing partner,  
Sustainable Dairy  
Technologies



*“In five to 10 years, electric vehicles, solar and battery storage are going to become a lot more commonplace. The price will drop, which will increase adoption.”*

**ADAM STOTZ**,  
chief technology officer,  
Trove Predictive  
Data Science



*“If you’re going to change things dramatically you need a lot more wind and a lot more solar. Five years is too short for anything meaningful to happen.”*

**RONALD TANSKI**,  
president and CEO,  
National Fuel Gas Co.



*“There is tremendous opportunity in New York state, which allows us to think and execute differently on these inherent challenges.”*

**PAUL TYNO**,  
strategic adviser,  
energy initiatives,  
Buffalo Niagara  
Medical Campus

#### ► HODGSON’S TAKE



*“You might not see a significant change in the portfolio of energy sources over the next five years. But the rise of the prosumer – the changing focus to conscious consumer-driven decisions in energy – is going to change the foundations that are going to allow wide-scale change in the future.”*

**DANIEL SPITZER**,  
partner, Hodgson  
Russ LLP

er project developers seeking a firm with experience in that area.

Marchiori’s comments came during a Business First discussion May 16 that was convened at sponsor Hodgson Russ LLP’s headquarters in Buffalo.

Other participants were Adam Stotz, chief technical officer of Trove Predictive Data Science; Kevin Neumaier, managing partner of Sustainable Dairy Technologies; and Paul Tyno, strategic adviser for energy initiatives, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Inc.

Hodgson Russ partner Daniel Spitzer and associates Henry Zomerfield and Jennifer Schamberger also were present for the discussion.

The panel included National Fuel Gas Co. President and CEO Ronald Tanski. National Fuel is known locally as an energy utility but a large piece of business involves developing and delivering natural gas.

The company has been locked in a dispute with New York state about the proposed Northern Access Pipeline, which National Fuel originally planned to construct in 2016 but is now shooting for a 2020-21 time frame.

The actual pace of change for the renewable energy industry is going to be a lot slower than the popular narrative about solar and wind power, according to Tanski.

He challenged participants to quantify their own carbon footprint – and was



Kevin Neumaier is managing partner of Sustainable Dairy Technologies, a company that markets methane developed from manure.

met with a mostly quiet room – before pointing out that what consumers really value is the cost structure and reliability of the current grid.

“With the advent of horizontal drilling and large-volume hydraulic fracturing, going back 10 years, your energy bill is about half of what it was back then,” Tanski said.

“It is incomprehensible to me that the state would say, ‘We have this energy that’s available, that is lower cost and cleaner burning than coal, but we don’t want our residents to use it.’”

#### ► CLOSER LOOK AT THOUGHT LEADERS

Thought Leaders is an ongoing series of discussions with Western New York business leaders and attorneys at Hodgson Russ LLP.

Each month, leaders in diverse industries meet for a roundtable discussion moderated by Business First journalists. Excerpts from the conversation are published after the roundtable.

Discussions are held in the law firm’s Pearl Street offices in Buffalo.