

### What's in this Publication

- ◆ Chairman's Message
- ◆ Executive Director Message
- ◆ Referral Contest
- ◆ New Employee Introduction
- ◆ Newsletter Ads for 2024

### Candice Pineau, QGM Grinding:

Chair of the Board



As we approach the midway point of 2024, I am thrilled to share some exciting updates and upcoming events with you. The Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance continues to thrive, thanks to the active participation and dedication of our members. Our collective efforts are not only strengthening our industry but also fostering a vibrant and innovative manufacturing community here in Buffalo Niagara Region.

First, I am pleased to announce two highly anticipated events that will provide excellent opportunities for networking, learning, and collaboration. On August 13th, from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM, we will be hosted by Nissha Medical Technologies. This event promises to be a remarkable gathering where we can explore the latest advancements in medical technology, exchange insights, and build meaningful connections with fellow members and industry leaders. Mark your calendars and prepare to be inspired by the cutting-edge work being done by Nissha Medical Technologies.

Following closely on September 10th, we have an exciting tour of Aurubis, a leading global provider of non-ferrous metals and one of the largest copper recyclers in the world. This tour will be an excellent opportunity to see firsthand how Aurubis operates and understand their processes and innovations. After the tour, we will gather for networking at the Foundry, a space that symbolizes the blend of tradition and modernity in our industry. This event will be a perfect setting to discuss ideas, share experiences, and strengthen our professional networks.

In addition to these events, I am delighted to highlight the commencement of the Northland Workforce Training Center's 12-week CNC entry-level course, which began on Monday, June 17th. This program is a cornerstone of our commitment to workforce development and providing career opportunities in manufacturing. With 15 dedicated individuals enrolled, we are fostering the next generation of skilled professionals who will drive our industry forward. Stay tuned for details about the upcoming career fair, where participating companies will have the exclusive chance to hire from this talented pool of candidates.

Our ongoing initiatives and events are a testament to the strength and resilience of our manufacturing community. I encourage all members to participate actively in these events, leverage the opportunities they present, and continue to support each other. Together, we are building a robust and dynamic manufacturing sector in Buffalo Niagara. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and enthusiasm. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and working together to achieve new heights in the months ahead.



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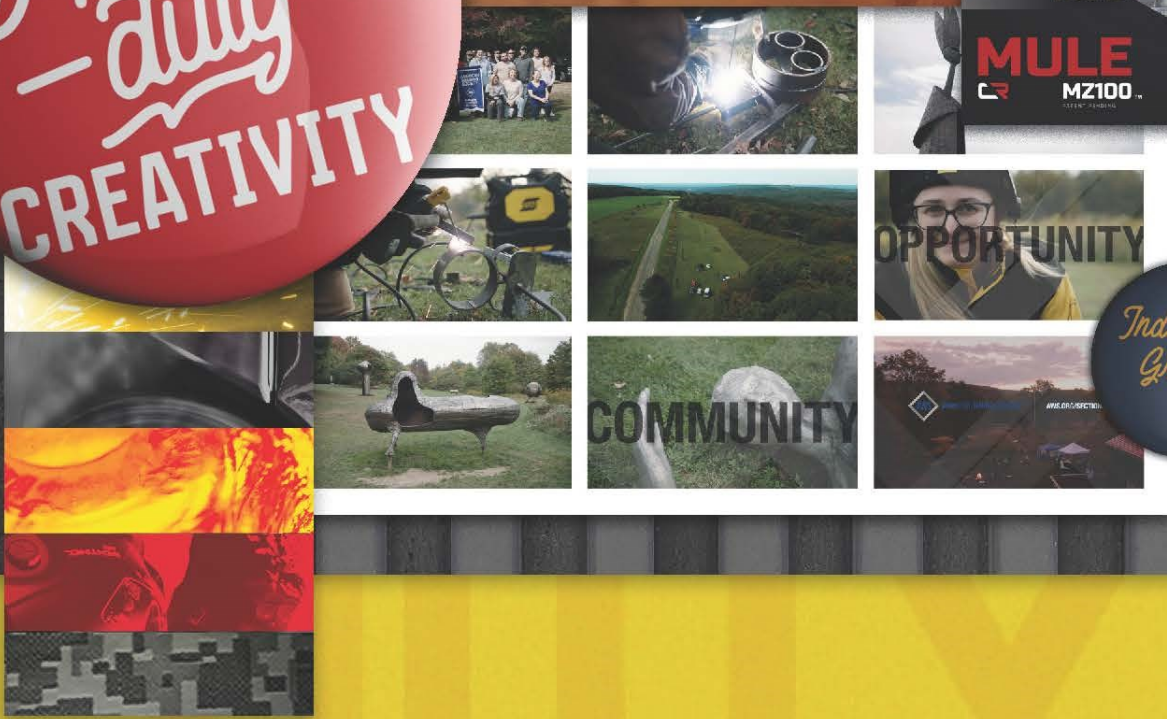
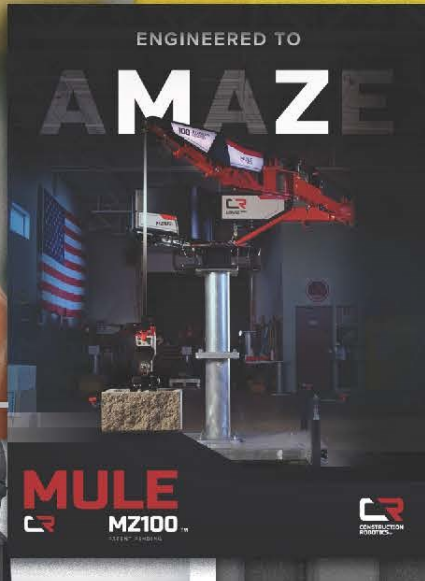
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## A Message from your Executive Director—Peter Ahrens



Membership,

As we move through the second quarter of 2024, I am delighted to share our latest updates and outline the path ahead for the Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance. The past few months have been marked by significant advocacy efforts, strategic initiatives, and exciting event planning—all aimed at bolstering our manufacturing community and addressing the challenges we face.

### **Advocacy Wrap-Up**

Our advocacy work has been a critical component of our efforts this year. The HEAT Act, which posed a significant threat to our industry, did not pass thanks to the concerted efforts of the Assembly in effectively halting this bill for the 2024 legislative session. However, it is important to note that this is not the last we will hear about the HEAT Act, and we must remain vigilant and prepared for future advocacy on this front.

Another significant legislative issue was the attempt to repeal the Covid Sick Leave mandate. Unfortunately, this effort failed due in part to strong opposition from unions and downstate progressives. Despite the support from our local assembly members and Republican state senators, we were unable to overcome the opposition from downstate legislators. The sunset date for this now-outdated bill has been extended to July 31, 2025. Rest assured, we will continue to advocate against this mandate, which no longer serves the current needs of our workforce and businesses.

Additionally, the push for Tax Parity, aimed at putting S corporations on an equal footing with C corporations, did not succeed this session. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Monica Wallace, (D) Assembly District 143, for signing on to this Republican sponsored bill. Her support of this important bill. Her backing was invaluable, and we will continue to work towards achieving tax parity in future legislative sessions.

Lastly, thank you to those members who came out to meet with Congresswoman, Claudia Tenney, (R) NY 24<sup>th</sup> district on May 30<sup>th</sup>. She shared how she came from a manufacturing upbringing and is partial owner of her family's company today. She heard our members pain points and vowed to continue to fight to support our nations manufacturers. She also urged each of us to engage and get involved with local politics. She stated "Your message are important, you need to be heard, but this will only work through engagement."

### **Upcoming Events and Initiatives**

I am thrilled to announce that the BNMA will be hosting a comprehensive manufacturing conference on October 22nd. This event will feature four dedicated course tracks—Industry 4.0, Marketing, Supply Chain, and IT Compliance—each presented by three subject matter experts. Following the courses, there will be an engaging trade show showcasing the latest in manufacturing innovations.

This conference promises to be an exceptional opportunity for learning and networking. I would like to extend my gratitude to our BNMA member subject matter experts for their dedication in attracting top-notch speakers, including some national experts. Special thanks go to Dominic Myers for leading the Industry 4.0 track, John Hogg for Supply Chain, Peter Ronca for IT Compliance, and Lauren Molenda for Marketing. Additionally, Lauren Molenda and Riveter, our marketing firm, have generously committed to supporting the graphic design and promotion of this event. More details will be released in the coming weeks, so stay tuned. this Fall.

In April, we launched the newly created Manufacturing & Tech Coalition lead by Stephen Tucker. This initiative is aimed at fostering collaboration and innovation within our community. As part of this effort, the BNMA is working with machine shops to develop a 10-week finishing and deburring course. This high-demand position is critical for our industry, and we are excited to kick off this course for the first 10 students

### Call for Member Support

The BNMA is continuously striving to grow and strengthen our network, and we need your help to achieve this goal. We are currently running a referral campaign, offering a \$250 Dicks gift card raffle for companies that provide two referrals. Your participation and support in this initiative are vital as we expand our reach and enhance our impact.

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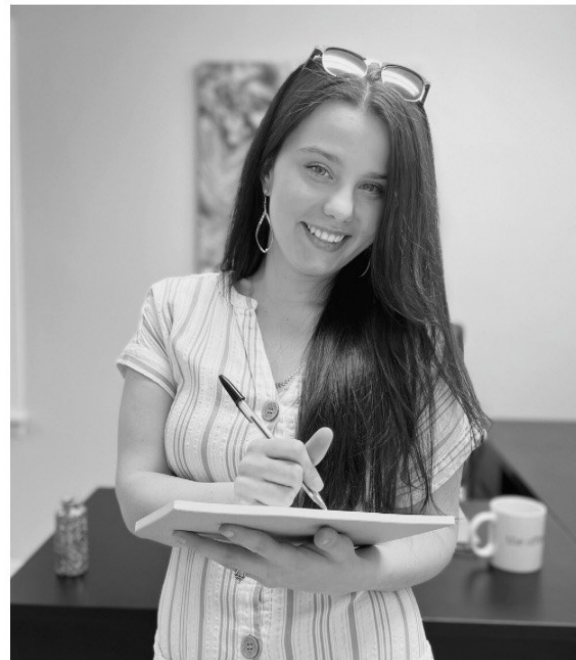


# New to the BNMA team

Although many of you may have seen me at recent events or communicated with me through email, I would like to formally introduce myself. I am Hunter White, the new Executive Associate as of April 2024.

## WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE

I came to the BNMA with an extensive background in Executive and Administrative support. My goal has always been to work with a company who has a mission that I truly believe in and want to contribute to. When I came across the BNMA, I was moved by the vision. My husband, who came from very little, started his career in manufacturing 13 years ago and has since become very successful. Manufacturing plays a vital role in not only the WNY economy but in many families lives just like ours.



*Dynamic Duo: Executive Director, Peter Ahrens and Executive Associate, Hunter White.*

## HOW I AM HELPING

Since coming to the BNMA three months ago, I have been working diligently on getting things organized, planning member events, social media growth, member relationships and more. I am always looking for a way to be proactive and help propel the BNMA forward. Every day I work happily alongside with Peter Ahrens to increase the growth and success of the BNMA. I look forward to continuing my efforts here at the BNMA and getting to know all the members.



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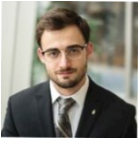
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## Why Review Sales & Use Tax in NY?

By William DiLorenzo – Published on Thursday, June 27, 2024

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Recently The Tax Foundation released a comparison of each state's tax rates, collections and burdens in their annual report, "Facts and Figures". The third table in this report ranks each state based on how favorable their tax laws are for businesses. Looking at New York specifically, we can see that their overall ranking is 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50. This highlights how important it is for businesses to comply with tax regulations in order to minimize the amount of tax paid.

The most interesting comparison one can draw from these rankings is between corporate tax and sales tax. New York ranks as #24 in terms of their corporate taxes, indicating the relative ease companies could have in reviewing their corporate tax accounting. Conversely New York's sales tax ranking is #42, indicating the relative difficulty companies could have. The reason this is so interesting (and concerning) is that most companies, either through their internal processes or via an outside firm, will review their corporate taxes but rely on broad heuristics when handling their sales taxes. This would not be a problem if state tax policy wasn't constantly changing.

In 2021 New York State reported that just over 7.4 billion dollars was collected in corporate income tax. This is no small amount to be sure; however, it pales in comparison to the 15.3 billion dollars in sales tax paid. Double the amount of corporate income tax!

The disparity between sales tax and corporate tax begs the question; why would a company review their income tax processes, which ultimately lead to the amount of tax they pay, but not their sales tax processes? The scope of reviewing any business's bills, even small ones, can be extremely time consuming. This situation tends to push companies towards a heuristic model and leaves sales/use tax reviews as the forgotten ingredient for financial health. However as previously stated, companies already hire outside firms to review their income taxes periodically so why not hire a firm specializing in sales and use tax to do the same?

Taking into consideration the unfavorable nature of New York State's sales tax laws and the sheer volume of tax collected, it is almost inconceivable why any company would not consider a review of the sales taxes they pay. Following a heuristic approach might function fine in other states, but following that approach in New York can lead to substantial sales tax overpayments.



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## **CASE STUDY: HOPE'S WINDOWS, INC. – INCREASING EFFICIENCY WITHIN FINAL ASSEMBLY PROCESS**

Hope's Windows is the preeminent designer and manufacturer of steel windows and doors in the US. Hope's Windows is a 100+ year old company focused on producing premium-quality custom windows and doors for residential and commercial new construction, retro fit, and historic preservation.

*Insyte helped us see where the bottlenecks were in our current system and provided us with solutions to improve our flow of orders. - Rob DuBois, Vice President of Operations*

**SITUATION:** Hope's Windows has multiple plants on their campus. Plant 1 houses the fabrication processes, which are then sent to Plant 3 for finishing operations (i.e. inspection, outside coating, prime, paint, final assembly, and packaging). An increase in sales volume led to some production issues that contributed to a negative effect on Hope's Windows' throughput and on-time delivery. The lead time increased from approximately 15 weeks to over 19 weeks.

**SOLUTION:** Hope's Windows engaged Insyte Consulting to assess the current state of the operations in Plant 3. A current state value stream map of the operations was created to help pinpoint the areas that were bottlenecks in moving material through the system.

Based on the assessment, Insyte provided the company with a series of recommendations. The recommendations included utilizing the concept of division of labor within the assembly cells, establishing and posting production expectations for each job, organizing work areas with visual cues, establishing a designated area for required components, and ensuring upstream processes were correct prior to reaching the assembly cells.

## **MADE IN WNY: FAIRS, CAROUSELS, AND MOVIE THEATERS – THE MIGHTY**

The Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ is the most famous product of North Tonawanda's Rudolph Wurlitzer Company. Between 1910 and 1943 the Wurlitzer Company produced 2,143 pipe organs. At its peak in 1926 the company was shipping a Wurlitzer per day. The organ was considered one of the most technically advanced machines of its time.

The Wurlitzer Company had a long history with developing and manufacturing musical products, with the Mighty Wurlitzer being its most famous. The company was founded in Ohio but moved to North Tonawanda in the early 1900s. Before moving to North Tonawanda, the company bought an interest in the North Tonawanda Barrel Organ Company in 1897. The Barrel Organ Company produced fairground organs for amusement rides, most notably barrel-shaped organs for carousels. Interestingly the North Tonawanda Barrel Organ Company was partially owned by Allan Herschell, of carousel fame. His carousels were also manufactured in North Tonawanda.

The Mighty Wurlitzer was developed to accompany silent films. Early silent films were accompanied by orchestras in the evening and a lone piano for other performances. Orchestras, however, were a financial burden for theater owners. The Mighty Wurlitzer provided a cost-effective alternative. The organ was able to imitate an orchestra and create special sound effects. Theater owners rushed to buy them. Once talkies became the range in the late 1920s the organs began to lose favor in the industry. In later years the company was not able to keep up with changing technology and in the early 1970s the Wurlitzer brand was sold to the Baldwin Piano Company and the Wurlitzer Company ceased to exist.

The Mighty Wurlitzer in Buffalo's Shea's Theater was custom designed by the Wurlitzer Company and was used by the company as a demonstrator for potential customers. The Mighty Wurlitzer in North Tonawanda's Riviera Theater was also used as a demonstrator. Today both venues have working organs used for various performances. Scroll to the bottom of this link [The Mighty Wurlitzer – Riviera Theatre](#) to hear the Mighty Wurlitzer in action.

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## Strategies for Navigating Manufacturing Contraction: Practical Steps for Buffalo Business Owners

Our economy has been in contraction mode for 18 of the last 19 months, with March of this year being the exception. Most recently, May's Manufacturing Index from ISM – the Institute of Supply Management – registered 48.7%, indicating contraction, down 0.5 percentage points from April. Key points from May data include:

- **New Orders Index:** 45.4%, down 3.7 points.
- **Production Index:** 50.2%, down 1.1 points.
- **Prices Index:** 57%, down 3.9 points.
- **Backlog of Orders Index:** 42.4%, down 3 points.
- **Employment Index:** 51.1%, up 2.5 points.
- **Supplier Deliveries Index:** 48.9%, unchanged.
- **Inventories Index:** 47.9%, down 0.3 points.
- **New Export Orders Index:** 50.6%, up 1.9 points.
- **Imports Index:** 51.1%, down 0.8 points.

Some business owners I talk with are seeing significant growth, while many others feel the sky is falling. Yes, it can vary that much by industry. Overall, however, the national data says we are living through month after month of soft demand and stable output. Inputs continue to support future demand growth, but investment hesitancy persists.

We seem to be stuck on a treadmill, but at a low speed. So, let's talk about what you can do about it! Here are a few thoughts on how to leverage your end-to-end supply chain to improve your financials during these relatively flat times. These are things you can start on with relatively low effort.

- **Focus on Efficiency:** With demand relatively flat, it's crucial to streamline operations and reduce costs. Implementing lean practices can help maintain profitability by eliminating waste, improving processes, and maximizing resource utilization. A good starting point might be an easy-to-implement 5S program for workplace organization. I see 5S as an enabler for many efficiency gains.
- **Monitor Demand Closely:** As new orders continue to decline, manufacturers must stay agile and responsive to market demand fluctuations. Regularly analyze market trends and customer feedback to adjust production schedules and avoid overproduction or underproduction. Can you implement a pull system or a VMI program with your customers? How about looking upstream and having your suppliers provide these same services for you?
- **Optimize Inventory Management:** With inventories and backlogs declining, ensure inventory levels are balanced to avoid excess or shortages. What organ do you use for developing your inventory strategy? Your gut...or your brain? Use data to help you create the right inventory levels, and work with suppliers to reduce their order minimums and multiples. And if you aren't cycle counting your inventory, start to do that! Today!

- **Enhance Supplier Relationships:** Supplier deliveries are stable, but monitoring for potential disruptions is essential. Strengthening relationships with key suppliers and diversifying your supplier base can mitigate risks and ensure a steady supply of materials. Do you have a supplier scorecard? Why not use that as a reason to host your key suppliers on a quarterly basis? Be sure to discuss quality and delivery performance, potential issues, and collaborative improvement opportunities. They will appreciate the feedback and transparency, and you'll have better service and communication from them.
- **Invest Wisely:** Be cautious with capital expenditures and focus on investments that enhance efficiency and innovation. Prioritize projects with clear ROI that align with long-term strategic goals. Instead of large capital investments, think about focusing on small, incremental improvements such as installing automated sensors to monitor equipment performance and prevent downtime, or other automation tactics like affordable co-bots (or other automation) to improve throughput, given our challenging workforce issues.
- **Manage Labor Effectively:** The employment index shows growth, indicating potential opportunities for skilled labor. We have all talked about workforce development in these past few years, but let's talk about documenting your processes. It's a relatively quick and painless way to preserve company knowledge and mitigate the 'beer truck' risk. And in this work environment, where employees change employers every 3 years, it's more important than ever to get people up to speed quickly- and ensure they stay there!
- **Adapt Pricing Strategies:** Despite easing, the Prices Index remains high. Evaluate pricing strategies to manage rising costs without compromising competitiveness. Is it time to rethink why your customers buy from you? Maybe a tiered pricing strategy with different levels of value would work for your segmented customer base?

By taking proactive steps and focusing on these strategic areas, you can not only weather the current economic contraction but also set your company up for long-term resilience and growth. Let's turn these challenges into opportunities for innovation and sustained improvement.

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- Managing different classifications of employees from skilled and unskilled labor to administration, engineering and even information technology staff.
- Labor law compliance, since regulations don't consider work environments using heavy equipment and machinery or employees working multiple shifts.
- Employee attraction and retention due to the limited market of employees with specific manufacturing skillsets.

**PEOs offer support in all areas of employment service,** including payroll support, compliance assurance, reporting, employee benefit options, compensation packages, talent retention, employee relations and development and performance management, to name a few.

### **PEOs also manage administrative employment functions.**

For example, a PEO will manage the employee leaves process from start to finish, including statutory disability, enhanced disability, PFL, FMLA and the various COVID leave programs.

By partnering with a PEO, a manufacturer can focus on its growth and management, knowing a large team of experts will act as an extension of the company handling all its employment and HR needs.



To learn more about PEOs, read more in this **informative special report** prepared by INC Magazine.

## **Shift 2.0/Launch NY Technology Webinar**

· **July 18, 2024 -12-1pm**

Join Shift 2.0 and Launch NY for an insightful technology webinar, "Top Ten Technology Trends for Small and Medium-sized Manufacturers to Watch!" Matt Malloy, Automation Program Manager, has been around the world at shows such as Automate, Hannover Messe, and he is excited to share the newest trends and technologies with you. These advancements include:

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### **Shift 2.0 Training Courses:**

All courses are taught at Buffalo Manufacturing Works, 683 Northland Ave, Buffalo, NY 14211 · Please contact Carol Burns at [cburns@ewi.org](mailto:cburns@ewi.org) for information about the Shift 2.0 program and enrolling members of your team.

#### **Robotics Basics: A Hands-on Workshop**

· **August 6, 2024 8am-4pm**

This course provides participants a hands-on learning experience with both industrial and collaborative robot platforms. Students will also learn key safety considerations for implementing robots into their workforce as well as applications for both types of robot platforms.

#### **Hybrid Robotic Integration Course**

· **July 30- August 1, 2024 8am-4pm**

The curriculum for this course is same as the Five-Day Robotic Integration course but is taught through a combination of online coursework and 3 days of in person instruction at Buffalo Manufacturing Works. The training covers robotic selection, operation and setup, basic and intermediate programming on industrial and collaborative robots.

· **July 30-August 1, 2024**

Fundamentals of End of Arm Tooling (EOAT) and Robotic Vision System Course: This course trains participants on safety devices, end-of-arm tooling (EOAT), and a vision system integration with a collaborative robot.

· **August 20-21, 2024**

o Students must have completed either the One Day Course, Five Day Course, or have intermediate robotics programming experience in their current position.





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The natural gas and electric energy markets are currently navigating a complex landscape shaped by evolving demand patterns, geopolitical dynamics, and an accelerated transition towards renewable energy. As of mid-2024, the energy sector is witnessing significant shifts in both supply and consumption, influenced by economic recovery post-pandemic, climate policies, and technological advancements.

In the natural gas market, prices have shown considerable volatility. The resurgence in global economic activities has spurred demand, particularly in Asia and Europe. However, supply constraints, partly due to geopolitical tensions, have caused price fluctuations. For instance, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has disrupted supply chains and prompted European countries to seek alternative sources to reduce dependency on Russian gas. This geopolitical reconfiguration is pushing Europe to enhance its liquefied natural gas (LNG) import capacities and invest in infrastructure to accommodate increased LNG shipments from the United States and other exporters.

Simultaneously, the electric energy market is undergoing a transformative phase. The push towards decarbonization is accelerating the adoption of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power. Governments worldwide are implementing stringent emissions regulations and offering incentives to promote clean energy investments. In the United States, for example, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has provided substantial tax credits and subsidies for renewable energy projects, fostering rapid growth in the sector.

However, the integration of renewables into the grid presents challenges, particularly concerning grid stability and energy storage. The intermittency of renewable sources necessitates advancements in battery storage technologies and grid management systems to ensure a reliable supply. Investments in smart grids and energy storage solutions are crucial to overcoming these hurdles and supporting the large-scale deployment of renewables.

Moreover, the energy transition is also affecting market structures and pricing mechanisms. Traditional utility models are being disrupted by decentralized energy production, where consumers become prosumers by generating their own electricity through solar panels and other means. This shift is prompting regulatory bodies to rethink tariff structures and market regulations to accommodate new market entrants and ensure fair competition.

In summary, the natural gas and electric energy markets are at a pivotal juncture. While natural gas remains a critical energy source amidst geopolitical and supply chain challenges, the electric energy sector is rapidly advancing towards a renewable-dominated future. The success of this transition hinges on technological innovations, supportive policies, and adaptive market frameworks that can balance the dual imperatives of energy security and sustainability.



Since our inception, the BNMA has actively sought opportunities to expose our members to strategies and tactics that lower expenses and support members growth. Navigating the complex retail energy space, especially in the context of New York State's CLCPA and the Climate Action Council's recommendations, can be challenging. EnergyMark has been a major sponsor since we began offering this investment in our organization and the manufacturing community in Western New York.

**If you are rethinking your energy plan or are just curious, contact Matt Lynett at 716.982.8056 or email him: [mlynett@energymarkllc.com](mailto:mlynett@energymarkllc.com).**

We would be remiss if we didn't take one more opportunity to thank our terrific Strategic Partner and Major Sponsors. Without their investment in WNY manufacturers and manufacturing in general, we would not be able to provide some of the services we offer today!

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