NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: November 12, 2026
FROM: Mari Mellick, Welch Township Community Member
CONTACT: mmellickcae@gmail.com

COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO HOST NOVEMBER 21 MEETING ON PROPOSED RIES FARMS / 2,000-ACRE SOLAR FIELDS

Residents to discuss proposed solar development and its impact on area communities

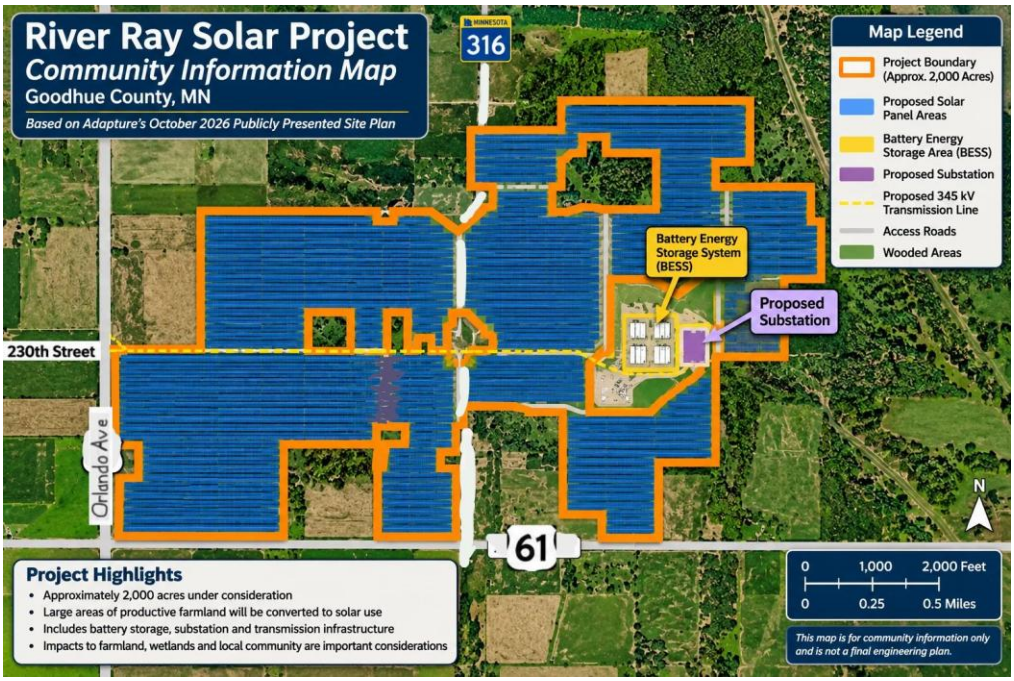
HASTINGS, MN – Concerned community members will host an informational meeting on Saturday, November 21, 2026, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Miesville Fire Station, 14221 240th St. E., Miesville, Minnesota, to discuss the proposed 2,000-acre, 300-megawatt utility-scale solar development in Welch Township, Goodhue County, known as the River Ray Solar Project.

The project is being developed by Adapture Renewables, with Nick Ries Jr. / Ries Farms as the primary participating landowner. Other landowners, Ted and Connie Niebur, may also participate by contributing approximately 75 acres.

The meeting is open to all interested community members, particularly residents of Hastings, Red Wing, Miesville, Welch, and surrounding communities. Organized by local residents and concerned landowners, the gathering will provide an opportunity to share information, review an updated project site map, ask questions, and discuss the potential long-term implications for the area.

NEIGHBORING LANDOWNERS FACE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

Several nonparticipating landowners – property owners who are not participating in the development – could find their homes surrounded by solar installations on multiple sides. One such property belongs to Kay McGrath, whose family has lived in the area for generations. "My family is sick about the solar field development," said Kay's daughter, Jaci Tuin. "My mom is nearly 80 years old, and her home – our family home – will be surrounded on all four sides by solar panels. She's lived here all of her life, and all she wants is to stay in her home and continue to look out over the cornfields that our dad farmed before he passed away a few years ago. It's so sad that she has to deal with this, and that others in the community will have to live with the impacts of an industrial-sized development."



Other neighbors are facing similarly significant changes. "Our home on 3.7 acres will be surrounded by solar panels on three sides," said Angie Kotula. "It's so disheartening to see how we will be directly impacted, but also how the entire community will be affected for years to come. It will completely change this area – the landscape and trees, the wildlife, the soil."

IMPACTS EXTEND BEYOND THE PROJECT BOUNDARIES

The proposed development raises questions that extend beyond renewable energy itself. A project of this magnitude could have lasting implications for productive agricultural land, neighboring properties, wildlife, water resources, and the region's rural character. Among the concerns that will be discussed at the Community Meeting are:

- **Agricultural land and rural communities:** The conversion of approximately 2,000 acres of agricultural land and the long-term implications for farming and surrounding property owners.
- **Wildlife and natural resources:** Potential impacts on bald eagle nests, deer, waterfowl, turtles, wetlands, floodplains, karst geology, groundwater, and water quality.
- **Scenic and cultural resources:** The project's proximity to the Great River Road National Scenic Byway and All-American Road, as well as potential effects on the cultural and historical interests of the nearby Prairie Island Indian Community. Representatives of the Prairie Island Tribal Council have been invited to the Community Meeting.
- **Public safety and infrastructure:** Questions about lithium-ion battery storage, fire prevention, emergency response, transmission lines, substations, and potential impacts on neighboring properties.
- **Developer ownership:** Adapture Renewables is headquartered in California, with KIRKBI as its majority owner. KIRKBI is the private holding and investment company of the Kirk Kristiansen family of Denmark, the family behind the LEGO brand. Concerns arise with potential loss or control of US agricultural land by foreign-owned entities.

The project's full footprint extends beyond the acres occupied by solar panels. Transmission infrastructure, access roads, substations, and battery storage facilities could create additional impacts and raise questions about land acquisition, easements, property protections, and costs.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS REMAIN UNANSWERED

Despite the scale of the proposal, many questions remain about how the project would be constructed, operated, maintained, and ultimately decommissioned:

- What environmental reviews and protections will be required for farmland, wildlife, wetlands, groundwater, and other natural resources?
- What fire-safety systems and emergency response plans will be required for solar installations and lithium-ion battery storage?
- Who will be responsible for damaged panels, hazardous materials, equipment replacement, and long-term maintenance?
- Will new transmission lines, substations, or grid upgrades be necessary, and which properties could be affected?
- What financial safeguards will ensure that decommissioning, equipment removal, and land restoration costs do not fall on local governments, neighboring landowners, or Minnesota taxpayers?
- What are the long-term implications for agricultural land, neighboring property values, and the surrounding rural community?

These are important questions for residents to understand as a development of this size could change the landscape and character of the area for generations. Residents deserve access to information and an opportunity to ask questions before decisions are made that could significantly affect their properties and communities.

COMMUNITY INFORMATIONAL MEETING

What: Informational Meeting – Ries Farms / 2,000-Acre Solar Fields Development
When: Saturday, November 21, 2026, 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Where: Miesville Fire Station, 14221 240th St. E., Miesville, MN
Who: All interested residents, farmers, rural landowners, business owners, and community members
Format: Project information, updates from area neighbors, review of an updated site map, and an opportunity to ask questions and share concerns.

The meeting is organized by local community members and is not an Adapture Renewables-sponsored event.

To keep current on the activities, follow on Facebook at **Hwy 316 & 61 STOP Solar Panels:** https://www.facebook.com/groups/1555866489354052.

The Hwy 316 & 61 STOP Solar Panels Community Group was created in August 2026 upon learning of the plans by Nick Ries Jr. / Ries Farms and Adapture Renewables. For more information or to join the Community Group, send message at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1555866489354052.

Hwy 316 & 61 STOP Solar Panels
Community Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1555866489354052