

The Connection

DECEMBER 2023

Merry Christmas to the World's Best Customers

Runestone Telecom is so fortunate to live and work in this community! It's a privilege to keep you connected with communications services, and we appreciate your loyal support of us as the local provider.

May you enjoy many wonderful moments with family and friends during the Christmas season, and may health and happiness be yours in the new year.

Contact Us

100 Runestone Drive / PO Box 336
Hoffman, MN 56339
Phone: 320-986-2013

Office Hours: M-F 8 am to 4:30 pm

Email: rtaoffice@runestone.net

Visit Us: www.runestone.net

Find Us:   

Holiday Observed

Runestone Telecom will be closed on Monday, December 25th for the Christmas holiday and Monday, January 1st for New Year's Day so our staff may celebrate with their families. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.



EXPLORING YOUR

Need for Speed?

YOU'LL ENJOY THE BOOST OF AN INTERNET UPGRADE

Going faster can be so much fun, whether you're on a sled or on your laptop. It's exhilarating to move quickly from place to place and experience more of the world in less time.

You can capture that feeling by upgrading to one of our higher speed Internet plans. We offer speeds up to 1000 Mbps—sure to delight everyone in your family with the enhanced Internet performance for streaming, gaming, and more.

GET MOVING AND CALL 320-986-2013 TO DOUBLE YOUR SPEED FOR AS LITTLE AS \$3 A MONTH!

Speed availability varies depending on location. Contact us for details.

Christmas May Look Different in the Future

While Christmas will undoubtedly always be focused on celebrations with close family and friends, technology including virtual reality and artificial intelligence will continue to impact how we gather, shop, cook, and more.

Here are some of the predictions of what Christmas may be like in 50 years:

- Family members who live far from each other will have the opportunity to “sit together at the table” due to holograms.
- Holiday menus will be dominated by very healthy, ecological food of yet unknown taste and colors, designed by biotechnologists.
- Robots will be in the kitchen preparing the meals.
- We'll buy presents via microchips. Everyone will make a list and upload it to their microchip. The person who wants to buy a gift, will scan it and choose the present, then the seller will pack it and ship it.
- Gifts will be delivered to homes by drones.

There's no word yet on whether fruitcakes will still be around.



Scholarship Opportunities are Available



Runestone Telecom is proud to offer scholarship opportunities through the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), in cooperation with the NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. These organizations seek to enhance the quality of life in America by increasing awareness of rural issues and strongly supporting the continuing education of rural youth.

The following scholarships are available:

- Four \$5,000 Staurulakis Family Scholarships (*Preference is given to students majoring in math, science, engineering, or medicine.*)
- One \$7,000 Everett Kneece Scholarship
- One \$5,000 Herbert and Isabel Bitz Memorial Scholarship
- \$5,000 in scholarships from Sarah Tyree Good Neighbor Scholarship
- \$2,500 in scholarships from Cronin Communications Scholarship
- One \$2,500 Diana Jo Dreyer Memorial Scholarship
- \$2,500 scholarship from FRS, with a \$500 match from Runestone Telecom (*Scholarships will be awarded per geographic region of the NTCA membership and one sponsored NTCA Associate member. The awards are distributed proportionate to the number of applications received per region.*)

Each scholarship applicant must:

- Be a graduating high school senior
- Be a U.S. citizen
- Be accepted by an accredited two- or four-year college, university, or vocational-technical school
- Have at least a C grade point average (GPA)
- Express interest in returning to a rural community following graduation
- Have a parent/guardian with at least one Runestone Telecom service

The application will be accepted by FRS no later than **February 16th, 2024**. A signature from our general manager, a member of our board of directors, or a designated employee of Runestone Telecom is required, so please apply early.

You can find the application information at www.runestone.net or www.frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships.

Like the Grinch, Scammers Try to Steal Christmas

We all know the mean and green character of the Grinch created by Dr. Seuss, who stole everything—down to the last crumb—from the homes in Whoville on Christmas Eve. Today’s holiday scammers have similarly cold-hearted goals, but they have a broader array of tricks up their sleeve to do the stealing.

Scammers know that people are busy and focused on merriment during the holiday season, so they take advantage of the situation to deploy scams including these:

Social media ads leading to fake online stores – If you buy from one of these stores, scammers can use the personal information you provide to access and drain your bank account, run up debts in your name, or commit other fraudulent activities.

Phony “missed delivery” notifications – You may receive a text or email asking you to click on a link to supposedly get an update about the delivery date, track the package location, give your payment preferences, provide delivery instructions, or pay a shipping fee. Or you may find a note on your door claiming to have a package for you that couldn’t be delivered and containing a phone number to call to reschedule the delivery. If you call the number, you’ll be greeted with questions related to your personal identity that can later be used to commit fraud.

Unbelievable deals on popular items – These schemes feature holiday gifts that many people have on their shopping

lists. The scammers offer deals that seem too good to be true (and are too good to be true) to encourage you to order quickly. If you do, you’ll likely pay for the item but never receive it. Plus, your payment information will be in the wrong hands.

Impersonations of well-known brands – In order to steal your personal information for identity theft purposes, scammers claim to be from companies you know, such as Amazon or Walmart, in their emails, texts, or phone calls.

Fraudulent charities that steal your money – Scammers create fake charities or GoFundMe campaigns during the season of giving to trick you into sending money or sharing your personal information.

Now that you know what these scams look like, we hope you avoid them and retain your Christmas spirit all season long!



TV Channel Updates

Are you a Runestone Cable TV customer? Here are some updates for you:

- **New channel** – KONC is being added to our lineup KONC on January 1st, 2024.
- **We are in negotiations with the programmers of the following stations:**

5	KSTP	17.3	True Crime	18.3	Antenna TV
11	KARE		Network	18.4	This TV
12	KSTC	17.4	Quest	18.5	Heroes
13	KVLY	17.5	Circle		& Icons
17.1	KARE HD	18.1	KSTP HD	60	REELZ
17.2	Court TV	18.2	Me TV		

If an agreement is not reached by 12/31/2023 these channels will come off our system. Please know we are working to keep your service affordable.

New Members

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Barrett
Hyttsten, Neil..... 320-528-2208</p> <p>Cyrus
JSB Farms 320-795-2247</p> <p>Donnelly
Donnelly Hall 320-246-3225</p> <p>Elbow Lake
Nissen,
Rose Marie 218-685-2124
Olson,
John & Lori..... 218-685-2000</p> <p>Farwell
Bryan,
Paul & Mary..... 320-283-5277</p> | <p>Herman
Herman-Norcross
Schools..... 320-677-2291</p> <p>Kensington
Green, Brock..... 320-965-2393</p> <p>Tintah
TAK Farms Inc..... 218-369-2000</p> <p>Wheaton
Potts, Mary Beth... 320-563-8559</p> |
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Warm Up Winter with Random Acts of Kindness

We have the power to change the course of someone's day through random acts of kindness. They don't have to take much time or cost any money. It's the small things that can make a huge difference.

Here are a few ideas:

- Call a friend you haven't spoken to for a while.
- Shovel the driveway for your elderly neighbor.
- Offer to babysit for a family member.
- Send an interesting article to a friend.
- Donate household items to a charity.
- Bring in homemade treats for your co-workers.
- Praise a colleague for something they've done well.
- Let someone jump the queue at the supermarket.
- Allow a driver to merge into your lane.
- Pay for the order behind you in the drive-through lane.

Runestone Telecom believes strongly in giving back to the community through volunteer hours, participation in community organizations, scholarship, financial donations—and random acts of kindness.



Start the New Year with eBill

A new year is the ideal time to begin new habits. Perhaps you've resolved to take a new approach to eating or exercise, learn new skills, or travel to new places. If you're still paying your Runestone Telecom bill by writing a check and mailing it to us, may we suggest you consider a new method this year? Switch to eBill and pay electronically instead. You'll enjoy these benefits:

- **More Security** – Paper bills leave you vulnerable to sensitive information being stolen from the mailbox or garbage can and used for identity theft. With eBill, you communicate securely with us via a password-protected online portal.
- **Lower Costs** – You won't have to buy as many postage stamps or checks when you use eBill.
- **Less Time Required** – Why waste time finding a bill, writing a check, looking for a stamp, and walking to the mailbox? You can pay online in seconds with eBill.

To sign up for eBill, visit www.runestone.net and follow the instructions. Call us at 320-986-2013 if you need help.

Directional Drill for Installation of Fiber Optic Lines

Runestone Telecom employees Nathan Richards and Christian McGaffey are seen here testing out our new drill. This machine will be used to place a conduit underground to pull in fiber optic lines during construction. Check out our Facebook post from October 19th to see videos of this drill in action.



Don't Miss the 75th Annual Jingle Bells Telethon

The 75th Annual Jingle Bells Telethon will air on Runestone Cable TV channel 6 on Saturday, December 9th starting at 5 pm. We are excited to bring you this live local event which raises money for nearly 900 families in need over the holidays and provides additional support throughout the year. You can also watch this event live and make donations at www.jinglebellsalexandria.org.

