Connections

DECEMBER 2024

Happy Holidays from Runestone Telecom!

May the season's festive moments help you feel jolly—whether you're decorating the house, gathering with family and friends, or enjoying holiday events in the community. It's been a wonderful year, and we thank you for letting us serve you.

We'll be closed on Tues., Dec. 24th and Wed., Dec. 25th for the Christmas holiday and Wed., Jan. 1st for New Year's Day. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.

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

24/7 HelpDesk for Internet Outages and Technical Support:
320-986-6655
helpdesk@runestone.net

Visit Us: www.runestone.net

Find Us:

Review Us on Google

Please let others know about your experience as a Runestone Telecom customer. Scan this code and leave a review on Google. Thanks!

Runestone Telecom Association

New Year NEW INTERNET VALUES

We're offering faster speeds at lower prices starting January 1st, 2025!

Your New Year will be even happier with Runestone Telecom's revamped Internet packages. You can look forward to a better Internet experience while video chatting, streaming, gaming, or working from home.

A managed WiFi router, offering network protection and control, will be included for ALL customers with ALL of these new Internet packages.

$75.95 – 100 Mbps
Best for light Internet use such as email, casual surfing, shopping, streaming a few devices, and distance learning.

$89.95 – 300 Mbps
Best for streaming high definition on several devices, surveillance camera system use, and casual gaming.

$119.95 – 1 Gig
Best for serious gaming, a fully connected smart home, and working from home.

Current Customers: Now have 10-15 Mbps or lower? Please call us at 320-986-2013. If you have 10-15 Mbps with a router lease or 20-30 + Mbps, you'll automatically be upgraded to the next higher speed tier appropriate to the new speed bracket.

Service availability and Internet speed will depend on location. Certain restrictions apply. Contact us for details.

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Enjoy the 76th Annual Jingle Bells Telethon

The 76th Annual Jingle Bells Telethon will air on Runestone Cable TV channel 6 on Saturday, December 7th from 5pm–10pm. We're 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.

Channel Negotiations Are Taking Place

Runestone Cable TV strives to keep the cost of your cable service low while we provide you with a variety of channels. We're currently in negotiations about our channels for 2025. Unfortunately, **GAC Family Channel #59** will be leaving December 31st, 2024. In the meantime, please continue to enjoy your programming, and we'll update you with any further changes.

New Members

Herman
Vipond, Eric 320-378-3015

Hoffman
Tirado, Kayla 320-986-2393

Lowry
Muzik, Robert L 320-283-2055

5G Won't Replace Wired Internet Networks Anytime Soon

You may have heard the term 5G mentioned by cellular companies and wondered, "What is 5G?" It's the fifth generation in cellular networks. The first generation began in the 1990s when cellular networks were being established. The second generation came with the first text messages. The third generation was marked by the first phones that could browse the Internet. The current fourth generation features faster, more reliable cellular networks and phones that can stream content like Netflix. The upcoming fifth generation is the latest iteration of cellular technology, engineered to increase the speed and responsiveness of cellular networks.

Despite the steps forward 5G will offer once it's fully implemented, wired Internet networks (such as Runestone Telecom's fiber network) are expected to remain the preferred technology for many Internet users due to strong advantages including these:

- **Broader Device Compatibility** – There are billions of devices in use today — including PCs, tablets, TVs, printers, sound systems, and smart home devices — with a built-in preference for WiFi Internet delivered via a fiber or coaxial cable network.

- **No Data Caps** – With cellular networks of any generation, subscription and service models are the only option and often include data caps. For this reason, heavy data users are better off with the cap-free structure of a wired Internet plan.

- **Better Security** – Wired Internet tends to be more secure since data transmitted through wire is more difficult for someone to hack than data that's essentially floating around in the air on a cellular network.

- **Currently Available** – Fast and reliable wired Internet service is available now from Runestone Telecom, while it may be years before 5G goes mainstream. One reason is that 5G will require the building of many cell towers, since the higher frequencies expected to be used by 5G do not travel as far as the lower frequencies in use today.

To learn more about the fast and reliable Internet service offered by Runestone Telecom's fiber network, visit www.runestone.net or call 320-986-2013.

FRS Scholarship Opportunities for High School Seniors

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.

At the time of this newsletter's production, details on the number of 2025 FRS Scholarships and their amounts had not yet been posted. Please visit www.frs.org/programs/youth-programs/scholarships for that information.

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 must be received by FRS **no later than February 14th, 2025**. 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.

Christmas Trees Shine Brightly With Fiber Optics

We usually talk about fiber optics in relationship to our fiber network, but since it's the holiday season, let's look at fiber-optic Christmas trees. While they became popular in the early 2000s, patents for fiber-optic Christmas trees date back to 1973. In 1989, Hammacher Schlemmer, a luxury gift store in New York, created a Christmas tree with 200 fiber-optic flowers that changed color. That tree cost $6,500.

Thankfully, fiber-optic Christmas trees are now available for much less money. They offer advantages including these:

- Lights are built directly into the tree itself, so you don't have to mess with strings of lights.
- Fiber-optic technology gives artificial Christmas trees an almost ethereal glow, with the light appearing to come from the tree itself.
- They come in many shades besides the traditional green—such as black, pink, blue, white, and gold.

You can't get fiber-optic Christmas trees from Runestone Telecom, but you can get fiber Internet. Check out the speeds at www.runestone.net.

Check Out These Photo Contest Entries

Thank you to Lulu & Becca Hilbrand and the *Grant County Herald* for sharing how they use Runestone Telecom's services to help them in their daily lives.

"We are thankful for our reliable Internet from RTA! At home training with no interruptions; just puppy interruptions." – **Lulu & Becca Hilbrand**

OCTOBER WINNER!

"We use our Internet to help create ads for fun community events, like the Elbow Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Trunk or Treat event, downtown Elbow Lake!" – ***Grant County Herald***

Focus on Our Photo Contest

You could win a $50 account credit! Simply submit photos showing how you use your Internet connection in your home or business, along with a sentence or two about your online experience and why you love Runestone Telecom. All entries will be entered into a drawing for the $50 account credit.

Contest Rules:

- Photos should be clear and of good quality.
- Contest open to Runestone Telecom customers only.
- Each household may submit up to five photographs.
- Photos should be digital, at least 300 dpi, preferably in jpg format. They should not be altered or enhanced and should be taken within the Runestone Telecom territory.
- Written permission from people in photos is required, since photos may be published by Runestone Telecom in print or digital form. Children under 18 years must have permission from parent or guardian.
- No printed photos will be accepted.
- All entries will become the property of Runestone Telecom.
- Submission implies consent to use photos on social media or any other marketing/advertising campaign.

Submit your photos via feedback@runestone.net or direct message us on Facebook or Instagram. Deadline for entries is Monday, January 3rd, 2025.

Phone Directory Delivery

In February 2025, the new phone directories will arrive by mail to customers. Extras will be available at our office.

Groundbreaking Event Well Attended

Runestone Telecom celebrated its expansion into Western Stearns County with a groundbreaking event in Brooten, MN on October 30th. This project will bring high speed fiber-optic Internet to these communities.

From left: Jeff Roelike (Crow River Township), Isaac Anderson (Crow Lake Township), Bob Ritter (Ashley Township), Stearns County Administrator Mike Williams, Stearns County Commissioner Steve Notch, RTA General Manager Kent Hedstrom, State Senator Torrey Westrom, Samantha Ernst (Office of Broadband Development), and Troy Walz (North Fork Township)

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