

Connections

AUGUST 2026

We'll Be Cheering This School Year

Another school year is beginning, and we wish the best of luck to everyone involved in local education. It takes teamwork and dedication to create a successful learning environment, and we enthusiastically support your efforts. We're fired up!

Office Closure

Monday, September 7th for Labor Day. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.

Contact Us

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Hoffman, MN 56339
Phone: 320-986-2013

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

Email: rtaoffice@runestone.com

24/7 HelpDesk for Internet Outages and Technical Support:
320-986-6655

technicalsupport@runestone.net

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Runestone
Telecom Association

BLAME THE DOG. *Not Your Internet.*

PAY ATTENTION, STUDENTS. WE'RE TALKING TO YOU.

School is starting soon, and you might find yourself needing an excuse for why you didn't turn your homework in on time. You could say your dog ate it (if the assignment was on paper). Or for digital work, you could claim file corruption, laptop failure, or a submission glitch.

However, there's one excuse your teachers aren't going to buy — Internet outage — because Runestone Telecom's fiber Internet provides 99.9% reliability.

Our advice? Just keep up with your homework!

Parents:
CALL 320-986-2013 TO LEARN ABOUT FIBER Internet.



988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Offers Hope

Too many people experience suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress without the support and care they need. However, help is readily available. By calling or texting 988, a person can connect directly with a mental health professional via the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline). The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is a national network of more than 200 crisis centers, staffed 24/7 to provide confidential assistance. These centers are supported by local and state sources as well as the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Veterans can press "1" after dialing 988 to connect directly to the Veterans Crisis Lifeline which serves our nation's Veterans, service members, National Guard, and Reserve.

Our 76th Annual Meeting Was Successful

All of us at Runestone Telecom greatly appreciate your participation and support. Your patronage means so much to us, and we're happy to be a part of your community! It's always fun to see our members come to our Annual Meeting and enjoy each other's company.

We'll share photos from our 76th Annual Meeting in our next newsletter issue, and we hope to see you next year for our 77th Annual Meeting.



What Parents Need to Know About AI and Schoolwork

As AI (Artificial Intelligence) becomes increasingly integrated into education, parents should view these tools as a double-edged sword—powerful for personalized tutoring and brainstorming, but risky for critical thinking and academic integrity.

If you have a child in school, here are several important AI issues for you to consider:

- **AI should assist, not replace, thought.** The primary goal of schoolwork is learning, which requires "the struggle" of thinking. AI should be used to help students, for example, understand a complex topic or brainstorm ideas, not to write essays or solve math problems completely. We don't want students to delegate their learning responsibilities to AI.
- **There's a risk of "skill atrophy."** Relying too heavily on AI can cause students to lose confidence in their own problem-solving abilities and creativity. If AI does the work, the student doesn't gain the skill, which hampers long-term progress.
- **AI information can be incorrect.** AI models often provide incorrect information (hallucinations) or biased answers, which can hinder learning. Students must be taught to verify AI-generated answers by using critical thinking and checking additional sources.
- **Know the school's AI policy.** Schools are developing varying policies on AI usage. Some encourage it as a tool, while others prohibit it entirely for certain assignments. Parents and students should know what is considered cheating at their school.
- **Address data privacy concerns.** Many AI platforms collect data. Children should never share personal information, such as names and addresses, with AI tools.

As a parent, you can guide your child through the benefits and risks of AI use by fostering open conversations at home. Ask them to show you examples of how they've used AI when studying or working on assignments. Emphasize that AI is meant to help them learn, rather than do the schoolwork for them. This is key, since once children develop a habit of turning to AI for answers, that reliance can be difficult to reverse down the road.

6 Layers of Scam Protection

While it can be challenging to keep up with all the latest scams, you'll be prepared for virtually anything if you take a multi-prong approach to protecting yourself and your information.

This is what to do:

- 1. Don't respond to unknown contacts.** The first layer of protection can be the most important because it's how a scammer connects with you. Never respond to calls, texts, or emails from people you don't know. Don't open email attachments, click any links, or call the phone numbers.
- 2. Check official sources.** Don't assume that communication that claims to be from your bank or other familiar organization is legitimate. Check credentials, verify information, and always go directly to the source.
- 3. Take your time.** Scammers love to rush you into action. By making you move too fast, they cause you to miss the red flags of a scam that you would otherwise notice. If you slow down, ask questions, and get more information, you might discover inconsistencies and stop yourself from becoming a victim.
- 4. Limit the information you share.** Scammers want your personal information to steal your identity. They may use information bought from data brokers, stolen on the dark web, or shared on social media, website forms, phone apps, and shopping sites. If you're sharing any information online, scammers may get access to it, so think before you share.
- 5. Talk to someone you trust.** When you are uncertain or in a rush, you can miss important details. Talk to a friend, family member, or financial professional about your situation. Sometimes talking to another person with a different perspective will help identify the red flags you might have missed.
- 6. Stay vigilant.** Scammers are relentless. If one of their schemes doesn't work, they'll try something else. To stay safe, regularly check your financial accounts and credit reports, looking for any discrepancies. Also consider freezing your credit, deleting unused online accounts, and shredding mail and personal documents before disposing of them.



2025 Capital Credits & Allocation Statement

Capital Credit checks will be mailed out mid-November, refunding approximately \$2,100,000. We'll be refunding the remainder of 2007 and 30% of 2025.

Allocation statements were mailed out to our customers on June 29th, 2026. Runestone Telecom is a Cooperative that distributes net income earned back to its patrons. This statement explains your share of the net income is based on services (telephone, cable TV, Internet). It summarizes the share of the 2025 net income and lists the total balance in your capital credits account. This amount is paid to you over time with the action of our Board of Directors, acting in accordance with the bylaws of Runestone Telecom Association.



When you're planning a project that involves digging, call 811 or visit 811beforeyoudig.com. At no cost to you, a locator will come out and mark underground utilities so you can avoid them safely. You might even spot one of our local Runestone Telecom technicians helping with the process. Calling is a simple step that protects your project, your property, and your community.



Streamline Your Bill Paying

- Conveniently pay your bill with eBill and AutoPay.
- Pay your bill by the 20th of the month to avoid late fees and disconnection. Please don't use staples to attach your checks.

New Members

Belgrade

Kampsen, R..... 320-254-3480

Cyrus

Osterman, Rose..... 320-795-2270

Donnelly

DL Schmidt Holdings
LLC..... 320-246-3212

Elbow Lake

Midwest Title And Abstract
LLC..... 218-685-4597

Kensington

Koloski's Happy
Snapper..... 320-965-9334

Wendell

Grant County
Motors..... 218-458-3000

Wheaton

Fibrantz, Rita 320-563-4797



Top Activities That Demand Fiber Internet

Fiber Internet is always an excellent choice. However, it truly shines for users who regularly engage in the following online activities:

4K and 8K Video Streaming – High-resolution streaming requires significant bandwidth. Fiber Internet's high speeds ensure there's no buffering, even when streaming on multiple devices simultaneously. Additionally, its reliability guarantees uninterrupted viewing, making it ideal for movie nights or binge-watching sessions.

Competitive Online Gaming – Competitive online gaming demands low latency and fast upload and download speeds to ensure smooth gameplay. Fiber Internet's minimal latency provides real-time responsiveness, which is crucial for the multiplayer gaming experience. Moreover, large game downloads and updates are completed more quickly.

Remote Work and Video Conferencing – Remote work, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, typically involves the use of video conferencing and collaborative tools like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet. Fiber Internet's symmetrical upload and download speeds ensure high-quality video calls without lags or interruptions. (By contrast, inferior Internet can lead to conference call distortions and delays, presentation snafus, and being seen as unprofessional.)

Cloud Computing and Backups – Many people use cloud-based applications and storage every day. You need the speed of fiber Internet to efficiently upload large files to platforms like Google Drive, Microsoft 365, and Dropbox.

Smart Homes and IoT Devices – As we add more smart gadgets to our homes, all these connected devices — from security cameras and thermostats to voice assistants and smart appliances — put more demand on our Internet service. Fiber's capacity to handle multiple devices simultaneously ensures your smart home ecosystem runs smoothly, while its reliability prevents interruptions. That keeps your automated routines and real-time monitoring systems functioning as intended.

Telehealth Consultations – One of the biggest innovations in the healthcare industry over the past 10 years is the massive expansion of telehealth. It helps healthcare providers assess patient needs much faster, and without the patient needing to leave their home. The reliable performance of fiber Internet enables clear, distortion-free medical assessments.

Questions about fiber Internet service? Contact Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013.