

The Connection

FEBRUARY 2020

We Lend a Hand

Runestone Telecom has a big heart. Our team loves to volunteer for a variety of local community organizations and events, and we view this work as an integral part of who we are as a company. It all comes down to providing people with connections to a better life. Happy Valentine's Day!

You Can Become a Director

This year there will be an election for a five-year term of the Barrett or Hoffman exchanges. If you are from the Hoffman or Barrett exchange and want to run for Runestone's Board of Directors, please submit a petition signed by at least 10 other members. The petition is available at our office or on www.runestone.net/the-coop. Our website also shares the qualifications to be a director and definition of members in the By-Laws.

If there's a contested race, the director will be elected by ballot and the winner(s) announced at the Annual Meeting. Completed petitions are accepted between January 24th, 2020 and March 24th, 2020.

Contact Us

100 Runestone Drive / PO Box 336
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Phone: 320-986-2013

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

Email: rtaoffice@runestone.net

Visit Us: www.runestone.net



GO FOR THE GOAL
of scoring much faster internet

Ice hockey is known for its incredibly fast speeds, and so is Runestone Telecom's internet service. Team up with us to score one of this area's fastest internet connections. You'll finally be able to keep up with your household's non-stop action including streaming movies and TV shows on multiple devices.

**CALL 320-986-2013 NOW
for FASTER INTERNET***



*Service availability and internet speed will depend on location. Contact us for complete details.

New Members

Cyrus

Carlson, Geoff.....320-795-8173
Moen, Dewayne.....320-795-8061

Elbow Lake

Albers, Edi218-685-4287
Lucas, LuAnn218-685-8397

Hoffman

Carstens, Garvin.....320-986-8351
Emard-Nielsen, Christine....320-986-4619

Tintah

Petermann, Henry.....218-369-2059

Wendell

Christenson, Spencer.....218-458-6279

Be on Guard for Tech Support Scams

Scammers may use pop-up ads claiming to sell fixes for your computer, which lead you to a website to download the software. You're told to call to "register" the software, and if you do, you'll be asked for remote access to your computer. Using remote access, they "examine" your computer and say it has problems needing additional "solutions." Next they want your credit card number to purchase these so-called solutions, often leading to credit card fraud. Alternatively, some scammers call and claim they're on the tech support team at Microsoft or another well-known technology company.

To avoid being scammed, never give access to your computer or provide credit card information based on a random pop-up ad or phone call.

Runestone Telecom wants you to stay informed and vigilant so you can outsmart the scammers.



10 Ways to Make the Most of Snow Days



When Mother Nature dumps a ton of snow in your area, you can either grumble about the things you can't do or celebrate the things you can do! Check out these cool ideas for snow day activities:

- 1. Declare a pajama day.** After all, if you can't get out, why not be comfortable while you're snowed in? Wear your coziest pajamas and slippers all day long.
- 2. Pretend you're at a spa.** Pamper yourself with a leisurely manicure, pedicure, facial, and hair treatment. Then soak in a bubble bath and dry off with towels that have been warmed in the dryer.
- 3. Catch up on your reading.** Curl up with that new book you've been wanting to read for months or reread an old favorite.
- 4. Pop popcorn and have a movie marathon.** Why choose one movie when you have time to watch several in a row? Choose different movies or a movie series to view from beginning to end.
- 5. Enjoy leisurely online shopping.** Snow days are ideal for taking the time to research the items on your wish list.
- 6. Organize family photographs.** Whether you've got printed pictures or digital files, a snow day gives you uninterrupted time to sort through your photos and categorize them.
- 7. Fort-ify your living room.** Have the kids build a fort with sheets, sofa cushions, and pillows.
- 8. Be an angel.** Dress warmly, head outside, and make snow angels in your yard. While you're there, build a snowman (or snowwoman).
- 9. Have a polar picnic.** Throw a blanket on the floor in front of the fireplace and eat a meal there. Don't forget the hot chocolate.
- 10. Paint the snow.** Fill spray bottles with water and food coloring and let the kids unleash their inner artist on the big blank canvas in the backyard.

With these activities, the forecast for your next snow day is sure to be a sunny one!

General Manager's Report on Television Rates and Negotiations

Cable Television rate increases are something Runestone Telecom must implement every year since costs for the content we put on our system continue to escalate at a very significant pace. As you can see from the price chart below, 2020 is no exception. *(Please note: When you look at your cable bill, we break it down into two parts. There's the RTA Portion (which is \$15 for the basic package and \$13 for the broadcast package) and the Programming portion, which is paid directly to the content providers.)*

Runestone Telecom is a member of the National Cable Television Cooperative (NCTC) and it negotiates with content providers not only on behalf of our customers but for approximately 3 million other Cable subscribers across the United States. Being part of a group that large gives Runestone Telecom far more negotiating power than we would have with our 1,100 customers.

Pulling TV content from our system is never desired but is a necessary part of the negotiating process. NCTC recently assisted us with negotiating the FOX networks, and on New Year's Eve, an agreement was reached and the Fox stations did not come off our system.

This year will be a very challenging one in dealing with content providers. Our contract with the Turner Networks—which includes: TBS, TNT, Cartoon Network, Headline News and CNN—expires the end of April. Our contract with the Scripps Networks (now owned by Discovery) ends in September and includes HGTV, Food Network, Travel Channel and Great American Country. There will also be four broadcast networks whose contract ends on December 31, 2020: KARE, KVLV, KSTP and WCCO. As we get close to the expiration date of each of these contracts, you may see notices of channels coming off, but please know this is a necessary step in working to keep you rates as low as possible.

	3/1/2019	3/1/2020	\$ Increase/Decrease	% Increase/Decrease
Broadcast	\$29.78	\$31.15	\$1.37	4.60%
Basic	\$70.55	\$76.63	\$6.08	8.62%



Have a Blast with the Past on National Retro Day

Every generation looks back and asks, "Remember when?" National Retro Day on February 27 encourages us to revisit a pre-technology decade in our lives—whether the '60s, '70s, or '80s—before the internet, social media, and smartphones.

On National Retro Day, connect the way you used to connect:

- Instead of texting, call friends and family members. Isn't it fun to hear their voices?
- Take a break from Netflix and go out to a movie at a local theater. Eat the snacks you enjoyed years ago.
- Replace online shopping with browsing around local brick-and-mortar stores.

To add to the fun, dress like your decade. Did someone say bell bottoms and a headband?

Scholarships Available

The Minnesota Telecom Alliance Foundation is giving away 10 scholarships of either \$1,000 or \$2,000 to students attending post-secondary education at a university, college or technical school. Applicants must be a Minnesota resident and their family must receive at least one service from Runestone Telecom. Visit www.runestone.net for the application and more information. Applications must be submitted to Runestone Telecom no later than February 21st, 2020.





February is “Extra” Special Since 2020 is a Leap Year

You’ll soon have an extra day to enjoy, thanks to the fact there aren’t 365 days in a year, but rather 365.242190. To compensate for this extra time, the bonus day of February 29 is added to the calendar every four years.

Let’s leap right into some leap year trivia:

- A person born on February 29 is known as a “leaper” or a “leapling.”
- February 29 became the official leap day because of the ancient Romans, who figured out their calendar didn’t work without a leap year added.
- The people of Greece believe getting married on a leap year will bring bad luck.
- In 5th century Ireland, St. Bridget complained to St. Patrick about women having to wait for men to propose. He set aside February 29 as the day allowing women the right to ask for a man’s hand in marriage.

Ready to leap up to a higher internet speed? Call Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013 to upgrade your internet plan today.



What are Common Causes of WiFi Interference?

If you’re experiencing slower than expected performance from your home’s WiFi network, it could be the result of wireless interference. This typically comes from three types of sources:

1. Walls and floors blocking wireless signals

The construction materials in your home can greatly affect wireless communication speed and range. Materials such as wood and glass don’t have much of an effect. However, denser materials such as concrete, brick, and metal can make it difficult to connect. These denser materials can also slow your network speed or even completely block wireless signals from reaching certain parts of your home. Large furniture items such as filing cabinets or bookshelves, as well as appliances like stoves or refrigerators, can also interfere with WiFi. You may be able to solve the problem simply by moving your router to a different location.

2. Appliances and electronics emitting radio frequency interference

WiFi interference can also come from other electronics and appliances that aren’t connected to your wireless network but use the same 2.4GHz or 5GHz frequencies to communicate. Examples include cordless phones, Bluetooth devices, and baby monitors. Microwave ovens generate radio frequency noise as a byproduct, so if yours is located close to your WiFi router, you may notice a network slowdown or get disconnected only when you’re using your microwave. Again, try relocating your router.

3. Other WiFi networks using the same channel as your own WiFi network

Interference from competing WiFi networks is especially common in apartment buildings and other densely populated areas. WiFi networks broadcast on channels, so when nearby WiFi networks are set to use the same channel, they’ll constantly be competing with each other for limited bandwidth. To rectify this situation, see if your router is able to automatically find the least crowded WiFi channel. If not, you may want to upgrade to a new router with this feature.

Poor WiFi performance can also stem from a too-slow internet connection. Call Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013 to discuss your options for an internet upgrade.