

The Connection

MARCH 2020

Spring Forward with New Services

March is when we “spring forward” for Daylight Saving Time. This got us thinking—in what other ways might you want to “spring forward” this season?

Perhaps it's time to sign up for faster internet speeds, enhance your home's Wi-Fi network for better coverage, or take full advantage of what streaming has to offer. Contact us if you need help making these changes. We'll spring into action.

Directory News

The 2020 Vikingland Regional Directory should have been mailed to you in February. You may also pick up a copy at our office.

Minnesota law requires all discarded telephone directories be recycled. Please return your old directory to our office, or bring it to your local recycling center. Grant County Recycling does accept old directories.

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

Runestone
Telecom Association



**TAKE YOUR GAMING TO THE
NEXT LEVEL**

UPGRADE YOUR INTERNET FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE
Although quick thinking and even quicker thumbs are a must in gaming, sometimes it's your internet that can make or break your performance. You need a fast, reliable, and lag-free connection to stay one step ahead of your opponents.

Take your gaming to the next level by taking your internet to the next level.

SPEEDS UP TO 1,000 MBPS

**CALL 320-986-2013 NOW TO
UPGRADE YOUR INTERNET SPEED**

*Service availability and internet speeds will depend on location. Prices subject to change.

New Members

Barrett

Larson, Ivadel 320-528-4708

Cyrus

Campbell, Travis 320-795-4091
Pieske, Beverly 320-795-2034

Elbow Lake

Pahl, Sean & Jessica 218-685-4631
Wilson, Amanda 218-685-8398
Grant County
Human Resources 218-685-8323

Hoffman

Sax, Rosella 320-986-6664

Lowry

Sanders, Adam 320-283-2197

Be Sunspot Aware

What are sunspots? They occur when the orbital positions of the TV satellite and the sun are in one line. We receive signals from both. When the sun's rays are more powerful, you may see a "loss of signal" message appear on your TV as we have lost the signal from the satellite. You may also experience fuzzy TV channels, sparkles, total loss of the channel, channel tiling or freeze frames on some channels.

Sunspots occur every spring and fall (in early March and early October) for about two weeks, lasting anywhere from a few minutes to 15 minutes a day. Keep calm. Your cable TV service will be back to normal soon!



IRS Warns of Social Security Number Scam and More

According to the IRS, taxpayers should be on the lookout for new variations of tax-related scams. In the latest twist on a scam tied to Social Security numbers (SSN), scammers claim to be able to suspend or cancel the victim's SSN. It's yet another attempt by con artists to frighten people into returning threatening 'robocall' voicemails.



During these calls, scammers may mention overdue taxes in addition to saying they will cancel the person's SSN. If taxpayers receive a call that threatens to suspend their SSN for an unpaid tax bill, they should just hang up. It's definitely a scam.

In addition to these SSN scam calls, the IRS is warning people about fraudulent emails designed to look like official communications from the IRS or others in the tax industry (such as tax software companies). These emails may seek information related to refunds or filing status, or they may ask for confirmation of personal information including a PIN.

Remember, the IRS and its authorized private collection agencies will never do any of the following:

- Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, iTunes gift card, or wire transfer. The IRS does not use these methods for tax payments.
- Ask a taxpayer to make a payment to a person or organization other than the U.S. Treasury.
- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying.
- Demand taxes be paid without giving the taxpayer the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed.

If you've received an IRS-related scam phone call, you can report it to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration using the online form here: www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam.shtml.

To learn more about tax scams and how to avoid them, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts.

Annual Notice of Lifeline Program and Telephone Assistance Plan

You may be eligible for help paying your telephone bill through these two programs:

The Lifeline Program is a federal one which offers a monthly discount up to \$9.25 on some landline telephone service plans and/or internet plans. Lifeline also offers discounts on some wireless telephone service plans and some broadband internet service plans. You may receive the Lifeline discount on one service per household. The definition of a household is anyone living at an address—including children, relatives, or people not related to you—who share income(s) and household expenses.

Minnesota's Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) offers a monthly credit of \$7.00 on your landline telephone service. You can receive the TAP credit on one landline per household.

Qualifications

The telephone or broadband service must be in your name. You must show proof that you or a member of your household participates in at least one of the following programs or is income eligible:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs

If you do not participate in any of the programs listed above, you may qualify if your income is at or below 135% of the 2020 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines:

Household Size	Income
One	\$17,226
Two	\$23,274
Three	\$29,322
Four	\$35,370
Five	\$41,418
Six	\$47,466
Seven	\$53,514
Eight	\$59,562
For each additional person, add \$6,048	

How to apply?

Contact Runestone Telecom or download an application at mn.gov/puc. One application may be used to apply for both the Lifeline Program and TAP. Return the application and proof of eligibility to our office. It can take up to two months for discounts to appear on your bill. Discounts cannot be applied to past due bills. You must pay the phone bill until that time.



Mom-and-Pop Business Owners Day is March 29

The colloquial term “mom-and-pop business” is used to describe a small, family-owned or independent company. In reality, a mom-and-pop business could be run by a mom and daughter, brother and sister, and so on.

Mom-and-pop businesses usually have a small number of employees, modest sales volume, and just one location. They often struggle to compete with national chains such as big-box retailers, who possess more buying power and other advantages.

National Mom-and-Pop Business Owners Day was established by Rick and Margie Segel in honor of their parents, who opened a successful hat shop in 1939 and grew into a 10,000-square-foot clothing store. The special day is designed to recognize the long hours, hard work, and dedication it takes to run a small business.

So on March 29, head to your favorite mom-and-pop businesses to say thank you—for the personal and unique shopping experience they provide as well their support of the community. Runestone Telecom is a big believer in the shop local movement, and thanks you for choosing us as your communications provider.

Plan Ahead for the Madness in 2020

Are you one of the many people who want to watch every game during March Madness—even if you're away from home or you don't have cable TV service? If so, take a few minutes now to check out the schedule and the different viewing opportunities available.

Games will begin with the First Four on March 17 and continue until the Final Four on April 4 and National Championship on April 6. CBS and Turner (which owns TBS, TNT, and truTV) share the rights to broadcast the 2020 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship.

The NCAA has a deal with CBS to stream all of its games. All you have to do is visit the official NCAA March Madness Live website (www.ncaa.com/march-madness-live/watch) to watch on your computer. This site even provides a Boss Button, which you can click while at work for the screen to change from the game to serious-looking graphs. To watch on your smartphone, tablet or other device, download the official app (www.ncaa.com/march-madness).

For games on TBS, TNT, and truTV, you'll need to gain access through streaming TV providers. You may be able to take advantage of free trials from services such as Sling TV (www.sling.com) and PlayStation Vue (www.playstation.com) to watch Turner's channels.

Another handy tool is the Catch Sports app (www.catchsports.com). It lets you set game start reminders and,



depending on your location and preferences, will share channel numbers, streaming options, radio stations, and local team sports bars where you can watch live.

Whether you're streaming basketball games in March or streaming TV shows and movies all year long, make sure your internet speed is up to the challenge. Call 320-986-2013 for details on our current internet speeds and prices.

IS YOUR INTERNET READY?

Are you planning to stream all the basketball madness in March? Have you been looking forward to all the hoopla with great anticipation? Make sure your home's internet connections has the speed you need for a winning viewing experience.

Sign up for a new or upgraded internet plan now by calling the Runestone Telecom team at 320-986-2013 now.

