

The Connection

APRIL 2020

We Keep You Covered and Connected

Runestone Telecom is here for our customers through sunshine and storms. Our umbrella of services — internet, TV, phone, security, and more — will cover your communications needs and connect you to what matters most. Plus, this technology is combined with friendly and responsive support from our local employees, which is sure to keep you smiling regardless of what the day brings. **Call 320-986-2013 to learn more about any of our services.**

News on the Turner Agreement

The current Turner Affiliate Agreement expires April 30, 2020. It includes these networks: CNN, HLN, TBS, TNT, Cartoon, and TCM. There are more than 650 National Cable Television Cooperative members (including Runestone Telecom) participating in the Turner Agreement. If NCTC is unable to negotiate an agreement by that date, it's possible the Turner networks could come off of the air. We'll keep you posted.

Contact Us

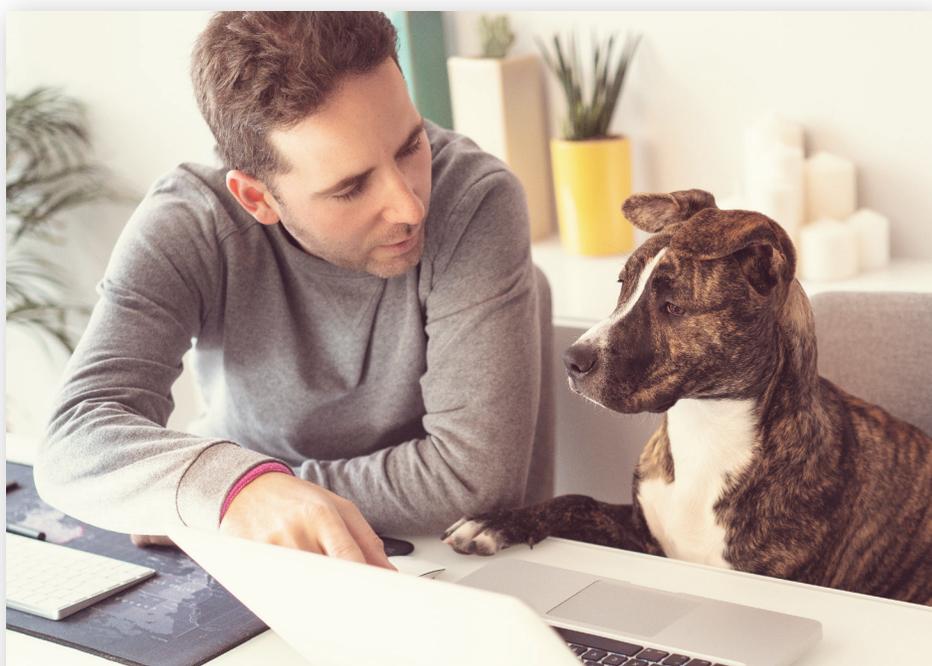
100 Runestone Drive / PO Box 336
Hoffman, MN 56339
Phone: 320-986-2013

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

Email: rtaoffice@runestone.net

Visit Us: www.runestone.net

Runestone
Telecom Association



DO YOU WORK FROM HOME?

**YOUR DOG ASSISTING YOU IS FINE.
DOGGONE SLOW INTERNET IS NOT.**

If you're one of the many people who work from home at least part of the time, you're probably realizing your home's low-speed internet plan doesn't adequately work for work. It takes forever to download large files, and you may be frustrated by your experience with video conferencing and other business applications.

**STEP UP TO HIGHER SPEEDS
FOR HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY.**

Call 320-986-2013 for an internet upgrade.

It'll help you get serious work done, even with a four-legged assistant.

New Members

Cyrus

Anderson, Susan 320-795-2109
Pedersen, Thomas W. 320-795-2139

Elbow Lake

Grant County
Human Resources 218-685-8323
Ness, J. 218-685-2301
Wilson, Karla R. 218-685-4131

Hoffman

Johnson, Vicki 320-986-6247
Lloyd, Mathew 320-986-2350
Pearson, Beatrice 320-986-6238
Richards, Nathan 320-986-3033

CLEC

Deal, Philip 320-563-8007

Kensington

Bangsund, Tricia 320-965-2005
Reque, Kasey 320-965-6239

Norcross

Richards, Bryan 320-284-4097

Wendell

Floden Farms 218-458-2217



Before You Dig, Call 811

All sorts of utility lines, pipes, and cables could be buried on your property and easily damaged by even shallow digging. This can result in service interruptions to your entire neighborhood.

Before you dig, call 811 to have utility lines marked. The affected local utilities will send a locator to your property, free of charge. Then you'll know what's below and be able to dig safely.

Remote Work is Working Well for a Growing Number of People

Working from home is expected to become more commonplace in the coming years. That's because remote work offers economic and social benefits including cost savings, improved work/life balance, and higher productivity. It's not just freelancers who work remotely, either. *The State of Remote Work 2018* found 58% of remote workers were company employees.

Do you currently work remotely or wish you could do so? You'll find these statistics interesting:

- **2/3** of employers report **increased productivity** for remote workers compared to in-office workers.
- **Remote workers** can **save \$7,000 a year** and employers up to \$11,000.
- Remote workers report **82% reduced stress**.
- **57%** of the **IT industry** in the U.S. is now remote.
- **50.9%** of the U.S. workforce, or 86.5 million people, could be **freelancing** by 2028.
- About **one in four Americans** are now **working remotely** on an occasional basis.
- The **10 most popular work from home positions** in America are accountant, engineer, instructor, writer, consultant, program manager, project manager, customer service representative, business development manager, and account executive.
- Gallup predicts **73% of employers** will have some **remote employees** by 2028.
- **1/3 of workers** would change jobs for remote work opportunities.
- **43% of remote workers** consider a **flexible schedule** to be the biggest benefit.
- Companies with female CEOs **were four times more likely** to offer **remote work opportunities** than those with men at the helm.
- **Less than one-third** of remote workers have a **home office**. Instead, **27%** say they work from the living room, **16%** from the bedroom, **13%** from the dining room, and **10%** from the kitchen.

Runestone Telecom can equip your home with a reliable high-speed internet connection to meet the requirements of remote work. We also offer a variety of phone and security solutions. To get details, call 320-986-2013.

Sources: www.tecla.io/blog/2019-remote-it-workers-stats-companies-should-know, www.greatworklife.com/telecommuting-remote-working-statistics-trends



Strategies for Maximizing Your Home's WiFi Performance



Given how much you use your home's WiFi network, you want the signals to be strong and reliable every day and in every room. If you're frustrated by your WiFi, give these strategies a try:

Place your router in the most central location possible. As you consider a central location, think top to bottom as well as side to side. In addition, don't put your router in an enclosed place and keep it away from devices including refrigerators, microwaves, and baby monitors, which can disrupt the signal.

Restart your router weekly. Some router firmware is a little "buggy," and over time it gets slow. A simple restart often brings it back up to speed. Unplug your router, wait 30 seconds, and then plug it back in.

Get a new router. Yours may not be built to accommodate today's faster internet speeds. Check your router's WLAN (Wireless Local Area Network) standard in the owner's manual. It will consist of the number 802.11 followed by a letter or letters.

- 802.11b and 802.11g. These are the oldest and slowest versions, with a maximum speed of 54 Mbps.
- 802.11n. This is a newer version with a maximum speed of 300 Mbps.
- 802.11ac. This is the latest version, offering speeds of up to 1 Gig.
- 802.11ac MU-MIMO (Multi-User Multiple Input Multiple Output) router. MU-MIMO routers send and receive multiple data streams simultaneously to multiple devices without speed drop-off.

If you have an older router, consider replacing it.

Buy a wireless range extender. Routers typically broadcast WiFi signals pretty well up to about 150 feet, beyond which the signal can get weak. (The range will depend somewhat on the thickness and building material of your walls and other obstructions.) For a large area, or if you have thick walls, you can buy a wireless range extender to boost your signal.

If after trying these strategies you're still not happy with your home's WiFi performance, you may need to upgrade your internet speed, or lease one of our managed routers for only \$3.95 a month. Call 320-986-2013 to ask about available speeds and prices.

New Employees

We would like to give a warm welcome to our two new Network Technicians, Matthew Lloyd and Nathan Richards. We also welcome our new Customer Service Representative, Michelle Jenson. We are happy to have these three outstanding individuals join the Runestone Telecom staff!



Matthew Lloyd (left) and Nathan Richards (right)



Michelle Jenson

Congratulations on Your Work Anniversary!

Jason Davidson will celebrate his 15th year of employment at Runestone Telecom in April. He works as a Network Technician installing and repairing our phone, internet and cable TV services. Thank you for your dedication and service, Jason!



FUSC Rate Change: The FUSC (Federal Universal Service Contribution) is scheduled to decrease from 21.2% to 19.96% on April 1, 2020.

Telephone Relay Service Information

Minnesota Relay is a free telephone service that uses specially trained communications assistants to facilitate telephone calls between people with hearing and speech disabilities and other individuals. Calls can be made to anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All calls are completely confidential. To make a relay call, dial 7-1-1. Once connected to the relay service, tell the communications assistant the type of relay call you wish to make. Or, you may dial the specific toll-free number for the type of relay service.

Types of Relay Services Available

Captioned Telephone Service (CTS): CTS uses a special telephone with a text display screen so that a person who is hard of hearing can listen to and read captions of everything the other person on the call says. You speak directly to the other person on the call, and a relay communications assistant transcribes everything the other person says into captions, which appear on the display screen of your CTS phone.

Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS):

Internet-based forms of CTS are available for those who would like to use CTS on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Go to: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/internet-protocol-ip-captioned-telephone-service>

Computer (ASCII): 1-800-627-3529. Computer users can access Minnesota Relay. Set your communications software to the following protocols: speeds ranging from 300 to 2400; 8 Bits; No Parity; 1 Stop Bit; Full Duplex. When calling at a rate of 300 or below, follow the above using Half Duplex.

Hearing Carry Over (HCO): 1-800-627-3529. HCO allows a person who can hear clearly but who has very limited or no speech capability to make and receive phone calls. Using a special text telephone, you type your conversation for the relay communications assistant to read to the other person, and listen directly to the other person's response.

Hearing User: 1-800-627-3529. A hearing person may use a standard telephone or mobile phone to place a relay call and speak with a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.

Internet Protocol (IP) Relay: IP relay combines text-based relay service with the ease of the internet – no need for a TTY. You are able to make your relay call using a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Go to: www.sprintrelay.com.

Spanish Relay: 1-877-627-5448. Spanish speaking persons with a hearing or speech disability are able to make relay calls. This is not a translation service—both parties must speak Spanish, and at least one party must have a hearing or speech disability.

Speech-to-Speech (STS): 1-877-627-3848. STS allows a person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the phone to communicate using his or her own voice or a voice synthesizer. The relay communications assistant re-voices your words so that

the other person on the call can understand them, and the other person speaks directly to you.

Video Relay Service (VRS): VRS slows a person who uses American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate over the phone. The VRS user connects to the relay communications assistant via an Internet-enabled device with a video camera. The communications assistant relays the conversation back and forth between the parties—in ASL with the VRS user and by voice with the called party. Go to: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services.

Voice Carry Over (VCO): 1-877-627-3024. VCO allows a person with a hearing disability, but who wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the other party. The communications assistant then types the other party's response, which is displayed on the VCO user's text telephone.

Important Info About the Relay

Emergency Assistance: TTY callers should dial 9-1-1 directly in an emergency. All 9-1-1 centers are equipped to handle TTY calls. Minnesota Relay can process emergency calls, but this may delay the response to your call.

Filing a Complaint: Email your complaint to mn.relay@state.mn.us or call 1-800-657-3775. When filing your complaint, please provide: date and time of the relay call, calling from and to phone numbers, CA's identification number, and the nature of your complaint.

You may also file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission:

- www.fcc.gov/complaints
- Voice: 1-888-225-5322
- TTY: 1-888-835-5322
- ASL via VP: 1-844-432-2275

Telephone Equipment Distribution

The TED Program provides free specialized telecommunications equipment to income eligible Minnesotans who are having trouble using the telephone due to a hearing, speech, or physical disability. For more information on the TED Program:

- Mn.gov/dhs/ted-program
- Ted.program@state.mn.us
- Voice: 1-800-657-3663
- TTY: 1-888-206-6555
- ASL via VP: 1-866-635-0082