



You Can Become a Runestone Telecom Director

This year there will be a director elected for a five-year term from the Donnelly, Norcross, Tintah or Wendell exchanges or exchanges outside Runestone's franchise territory. If you're a member from one of those exchanges and interested in running for Runestone Telecom's Board of Directors, please submit a petition signed by at least 10 other members. The petition can be obtained at our office or from our website, where you can also see the qualifications to be a director and definition of members in the By-Laws. Please visit: www.runestone.net and click on "The Coop" for more information.

If there's a contested race, directors are elected by ballot and the winner(s) is announced at the Annual Meeting. Completed petitions are accepted between January 15th, 2021, and March 16th, 2021.

New Members

Cyrus

Hansen, Corey.....795-2022
Hills, Blaine..... 795-3056

Elbow Lake

Wall, Ginny..... 685-4539

When Shopping Online, Choose the Sellers Carefully

Shopping online is so convenient. However, to reduce the security risks associated with it, you must take precautions. They include using a credit card (rather than a debit card) to get maximum buying protection, checking your credit card accounts frequently for unusual activity, and not shopping while on a public WiFi network.

Perhaps the most critical precautions, however, are the ones related to choosing the sites from which you make purchases:

Do your homework. If you're wary of a site, perform your due diligence. The Better Business Bureau has an online directory and a scam tracker, and Yelp and Google are full of retailer reviews. Take the time to conduct thorough research before you give a seller your credit card number. Keep in mind that online reviews can be faked, so if you see nothing but glowing reviews from unverified buyers, be suspicious. Follow your instincts and make the purchase elsewhere.



In addition, make sure you have a physical address and a working phone number for the seller. If things go bad, at least you'll have a place to take your complaint. Call them before you order so you can clarify a return policy and where to go with any issues after the purchase.

Stick to trusted sites. Search results can be rigged to lead you astray, especially when you drift past the first few pages of links. It's generally best to stick with major, big-name retailers or companies with which you have an established relationship.

Look for the lock. Never buy anything online from a site that doesn't have SSL (secure sockets layer) encryption installed. You'll know if the site has SSL because its URL will start with "https" instead of just "http." An icon of a locked padlock will also appear, typically to the left of the URL in the address bar or the status bar down below, depending on your browser.



Early Cellphones Were the Size of Bricks

What did your first cellphone look like? That's a fun question to answer, since cellphones have gone through such an incredible evolution over the years in terms of size, shape, and features.

The first cellphones were known as car phones, as they were too large and cumbersome to carry around. The original car phone weighed a whopping 80 pounds! Not surprisingly, they were used mainly by traveling salespeople and other workers who spent much of their time in their cars.

In 1973 Motorola engineer Martin Cooper showed what the future would look like: the DynaTAC 8000X—the world's first handheld cellphone. Then 10 years and a \$100 million investment in cellular infrastructure later, Motorola finally released the cellphone to the public. It took 10 hours to charge, lasted 35 minutes, and cost about \$4,000.

Though huge by today's standards, the DynaTAC was considered the first truly mobile phone because it was small enough to carry. It became a status symbol in pop culture. For example, it was used by the character Gordon Gekko in the movie *Wall Street*.

Within a few years, cellphones began to shrink in size. The Motorola MicroTac was introduced in 1989, a flip phone small enough to fit inside a shirt pocket. As the technology advanced, cellphone companies figured out how to pack the features their customers wanted into a smaller and more affordable design.

It wasn't until the iPhone made its debut in 2007 that cellphones began transitioning from their role as a means for making calls to a multi-functional tool. With this first iPhone, Apple introduced touchscreen functions, Internet access through Safari, a virtual keyboard, and full rich-text email access. The iPhone would forever change the industry.

Today, verbal communication is secondary to taking photos, updating social media, streaming videos, and other mobile activities. What does the future hold for cellphones? The World Economic Forum thinks the first implantable models will become commercially available by 2024.

Do Not Call Registry

You can reduce the number of unwanted sales calls you get by signing up for the National Do Not Call Registry. This registry applies to all telemarketers with the exception of businesses you have an existing relationship with, certain non-profit groups and political organizations.

Register your home telephone number or wireless number by calling: 1-888-382-1222 (TTY call 1-866-290-4236) or at their website: www.donotcall.gov.

To register by phone, you must call from the number you wish to register.

The Do Not Call Registry will be effective within 31 days of your registration and will remain on it unless the number is disconnected. You can also remove your name from the list at any time by calling toll free 1-888-382-1222 from the phone number you want removed.





Everything's Easier With a Local Business

There are many community-centered reasons to buy local whenever possible. For example, when you choose to buy products or services from a local business, you're supporting a local employer and helping to boost the local economy. You're also enabling unique independent businesses to keep going, which is important since they add personality and appeal to the community.

In addition, there are other easy-to-appreciate reasons to buy local. When you choose a local business, it's:

- **Easier to talk to a human being.** Your call won't be transferred to a faraway place. Instead, it will be answered by a local employee.
- **Easier to get responsive customer service.** You can count on being treated well whenever there's an issue to resolve.
- **Easier to enjoy the shopping experience.** Isn't it more fun to do business with a local owner or manager who clearly has a passion for what they do?

Runestone Telecom encourages you to buy local and thanks you for choosing us, the local communications provider.

5 Signs Your Home May Need Faster Internet

Are you wondering whether or not your home needs an Internet speed upgrade? If you see these signs, the answer is probably "yes."

1. You experience frequent buffering while streaming.

It's not fun when your screen freezes and you're stuck waiting while the endless circle goes around and around. Buffering is the result of an Internet connection that isn't fast enough and a sign you need more speed.

2. You're planning to add more streaming subscriptions.

Does your family love streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video? Be aware that adding more streaming subscriptions (or additional streaming devices) can quickly bog down your Internet connection, especially if you have multiple people streaming simultaneously.

3. You're big on smart home devices.

If you're a smart home fan, you need to make sure your Internet connection can support your smart speakers, smart light bulbs, smart thermostats, smart cameras, smart appliances, and so on. Trying to get by with an inadequate Internet connection is simply not smart.

4. Your home often has guests (who bring devices).

Whether it's your children's friends for sleepovers or your relatives for a week-long visit, it seems like everybody will want to use your WiFi as soon as they walk in the door. If you don't have enough bandwidth, the "more" isn't the "merrier"—it can cause Internet slowdowns.

5. You work from home.

Bandwidth-intensive applications such as video conferences and screen-sharing collaborations demand a strong Internet connection. Don't risk looking unprofessional or wasting your colleagues' time with frozen screens and choppy audio. Make sure your Internet connection works well for work.

For help choosing the right Internet speed for your home, call Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013. We'll talk with you about your online requirements and provide details about our selection of Internet plans.

