

The Connection

APRIL 2021



Make Plans for Planting on National Gardening Day

April 14 is National Gardening Day, a time to plan the outdoor space of your dreams. To celebrate, you could sign up for a gardening course or check out the many gardening resources online. You could also visit your local garden center for beautiful inspiration.

If your gardening plans include new bushes or trees, be sure to call 811 before you dig. Underground lines must be located and marked to avoid accidental damage.

FUSC Rate Change

The FUSC (Federal Universal Service Contribution) is scheduled to increase from 31.8% to 33.4% on April 1st, 2021.

Contact Us

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In July 2020, the Federal Communications Commission adopted an order approving the designation of 988 as the 3-digit dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. To facilitate implementation, area codes across the country where the 988 prefix is a working prefix and which now use 7-digit local dialing must transition to 10-digit local dialing. This includes the 218 & 320 area codes in our service area.

Starting October 24, 2021, you'll need to dial the 218 or 320 area code, plus the 7-digit phone number to make local calls. In addition to changing your dialing routine, you'll also have to reprogram 7-digit local numbers to 10-digit numbers if you use speed dial or any other system that automatically makes calls for you.

For more details, call us at 320-986-2013.

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/sprintiprelay.

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.

Text Telephone (TTY): 1-800-627-3529. This service allows a person who is deaf, deafblind, or speech disabled to use a TTY to communicate with the other person on the call.

Video Relay Service (VRS): VRS allows 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:

- Consumercomplaints.fcc.gov
- TTY: 1-888-835-5322
- Voice: 1-888-225-5322
- 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/deaf-hard-of-hearing
- Voice: 1-800-657-3663
- ASL via VP: 651-964-1514

Take Streaming Services for a Spin with Free Trials



When streaming services like Netflix began, they all offered a free trial, hoping that once you watched their content you'd become a monthly subscriber. While this sales strategy is slowly becoming less common—Netflix has discontinued it—there are still streaming services that let you try them out without paying a cent.

Let's say you want to watch a TV series your friends have been raving about that's only available from one streaming service. Naturally, it's a service you don't have and don't want to sign up for on a long-term basis. If available, take advantage of a free trial to binge the series over a weekend. Or maybe your family is starting to get bored with the streaming services you've had for years, and wants to "test drive" a few others for the fun of it. Again, a free trial is the best route to take.

Keep in mind that to use these free trials, you'll probably need to enter credit card information. Some streaming services will automatically renew after the trial period is over, so set a reminder for yourself to cancel before this date if you don't plan to keep the service.

A recent check of popular streaming services yielded this list of free-trial offers, and we share it here to give you an idea of the possibilities. However, these offers are subject to change without notice, so visit the websites of services you're considering to get the most current details.

- **Amazon Kids+** – Free one-month trial of the Single Child plan
- **Amazon Prime Video** – Included with Amazon Prime membership and a 30-day free trial is available
- **CBS All Access** – Free 7-day trial
- **Fubo TV** – Free 7-day trial
- **Hulu** – First month free
- **Peacock Premium or Peacock Premium Plus** – Free one-week trial
- **Philo** – Free 7-day trial
- **Showtime** – 30-day free trial
- **SlingTV** – 7-day free trial
- **YouTube TV** – Free two-week trial

Why not enjoy free trials of several streaming services? There may be no such thing as a free lunch, but there is free entertainment!

To enhance your streaming experience even more, call 320-986-2013 and ask about getting an Internet speed upgrade.

Step Forward to Celebrate National Walking Day

National Walking Day has taken place on the first Wednesday in April since the American Heart Association launched the holiday in 2007 as a way to promote healthy living and encourage more aerobic exercise. Walking 10,000 steps per day is an effective way to improve your health and help prevent certain diseases.

Did you know walking can also help you reduce your caloric intake? As little as 15 minutes of walking can curb a craving for chocolate or other sweet foods. In addition, walking is easy to do—you don't need any special skills, and no equipment is required. Plus, it gets you outside to enjoy the fresh air and scenery. You can make your walks more enjoyable by including a friend, drinking plenty of water, and maintaining good posture.

According to fossilized footprints, it's likely that humans were walking about 1.5 million years ago in a manner similar to how we do it today. Animals may beat us at running, swimming, and flying, but humans excel at walking!



Get Ready for 10-Digit Dialing for Local Calls

In July 2020, the FCC adopted an order approving the designation of 988 as the 3-digit dialing code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. To facilitate implementation, area codes where the 988 prefix is a working prefix and which now use 7-digit local dialing must switch to 10-digit local dialing. This includes our 218 and 320 area codes.

Beginning April 21, 2021, you should start dialing 10-digits for all local calls—the 218 or 320 area codes plus the 7-digit phone number. If you forget to do so during this transition period, your calls will still be completed. But starting October 24, 2021, you'll be required to dial 10-digits when making a local call.

In addition to changing your dialing routine, you'll also have to reprogram 7-digit local numbers to 10-digit numbers in any device that automatically makes calls for you such as the speed dial feature on a phone, home security equipment, or a personal emergency response system.

For more details, call Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013.

New Members

Elbow Lake

K & L Market 218-685-4221
Roxy's Golden B & B 218-685-5339
Wall, Ginny 218-685-4539

Hoffman

Giese Farms 320-986-2477

Kensington

BMZ Plumbing 320-965-9100

Tintah

Elbow Lake Co-Op Grain.. 218-369-2182
Homme, Tommy 218-369-3230

811 Brings Utility Locators to You

Everyone gets excited when warm weather rolls around, and many homeowners are quick to start new landscaping projects. It's a great time to plant trees and shrubs, install water features or decks, tend to flower and vegetable gardens, and put new fences up to enclose your yard.

If you're planning an outdoor project, remember: before you do anything, call 811 first. It's critical to know the location of all your underground utility lines.

Why 811?

The national, 811 hotline was launched in 2005 with support from the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), which is a coalition of excavators, road builders, utility and emergency service providers, and others. Their goal is to help prevent damage to America's extensive underground infrastructure, thereby reducing related injuries and deaths.

811 was designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to give quick, easy access to line location services. With just a single number to remember, there's no excuse not to call.

How it works

When you or your contractor calls 811, the call will be routed to your local "one call" center. Your local operator will ask about the digging location, and then route your information to the appropriate utility companies.

Each company—which may include gas, electric, cable TV, water and other providers—will then send representatives to your location to mark your lines. Typically, lines are marked with small flags that can be easily removed when your project is complete.

It's that easy! Just remember to call at least two days before you plan to do your digging.

What if I don't call?

Calling before you dig isn't just a suggestion—it's the law. When you dig without knowing the location of your utility lines, you risk injuring yourself and others, or doing damage to critical power lines. Such damage can result in service outages for your entire neighborhood, which may mean fines and repair costs for you.

Once isn't always enough

Over time, erosion, root growth and other factors can affect the depth and location of utility lines, so be sure to call before any digging project, even if you've had your lines marked previously. After all, when it comes to digging, it's better to be safe than sorry!



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**