

The Connection

MAY 2021

A Salute to Many in the Month of May

May features several holidays that pay tribute to people who have positively impacted our families and our country. During this month, we celebrate National Nurses Day on May 6th, Mother's Day on May 9th, Armed Forces Day on May 15th and Memorial Day on May 31st.

Runestone Telecom salutes all of our customers whose lives are honored during these special days. Whether by healing wounds, raising children, or defending freedom, you've made a difference.

Save the Date: July 14th

The Runestone Telecom Annual Meeting will be held on July 14th. More details to follow in the coming months.

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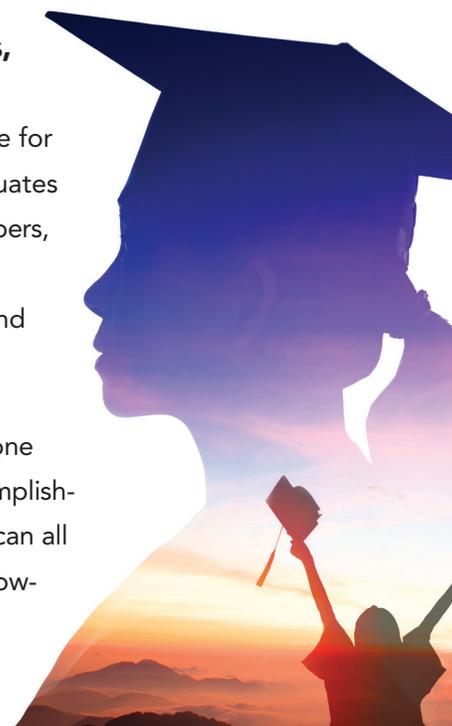
Holiday Observed

Runestone Telecom will be closed on May 31st in observance of Memorial Day. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.

WE WISH EVERY GRADUATE A BRIGHT FUTURE

Life is filled with milestones, and some of the biggest are graduations. They're cause for celebration not only for the graduates but also for all of the family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, and coaches who provided support and encouragement along the way.

As a community member, Runestone Telecom is proud to see the accomplishments of our area's students. We can all look forward to a bright future knowing these young people will apply their talents toward helping to make the world a better place.



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!



Spring Work Has Begun

The Runestone Telecom crew has started spring plow work! Pictured is Ryan Schonhardt near Tintah.

Work Anniversaries

Runestone Telecom is proud to celebrate some major career milestones with our employees this month. Congratulations to Braden



Long for five years of service at Runestone, Ryan Schonhardt for 15 years of service, and Clay Drews for 25 years of service. We're so lucky to have you as part of the Runestone Telecom team!



Cable TV Channel Updates

FOX Sports Regional Networks has changed its name to Bally Sports. It can be viewed on Runestone Telecom channels 27 and 29.1. The Circle has moved from channel 17.5 to channel 15.5.



Paying Bills Online Offers Valuable Advantages

Are you still receiving paper bills and paying them by writing and mailing checks? While you may feel comfortable with this method after using it for many years, consider making a switch to online bill pay.

Why? Online bill pay provides valuable advantages including these:

You Gain Security – When you have printed bills and envelopes with checks in your mailbox, sensitive information could be stolen and used for identity theft. But when you receive and pay bills electronically, you communicate with your bank, utility, or other company via a password-protected online portal that uses encryption and other security technologies to keep your information secure.

You Save Time and Money – Why waste time finding a bill, writing a check, looking for a stamp, and walking to the mailbox? With online bill pay, you can pay in seconds or have your bill paid automatically each month through an Auto Pay program. You also won't have to buy as many postage stamps or checks when you use online bill pay.

There are two categories of online bill pay available. You can pay companies individually via their website, such as what's offered with Runestone Telecom's eBill. Or you can authorize your bank or credit union to pay multiple bills from different companies using its website or mobile app. There's no need to choose one or the other exclusively. You can use either online bill pay method or both, depending on what best suits your financial needs.

Our eBill service lets you receive your monthly bills from Runestone Telecom by email and pay them online with your credit card or debit card. You also have the option to choose Auto Pay to have your payment automatically deducted from your chosen bank account each month, so you don't have to worry about forgetting to pay your bill. If you chose recurring bank Auto Pay, eBill, and Paperless Billing, you'll receive a \$3 credit off your monthly Runestone Telecom bill!

To get started with eBill and set up your account, simply visit www.runestone.net and follow the step-by-step instructions. If you have questions, call 320-986-2013.

Capital Credit Checks

The Runestone Telecom Board of Directors approved a capital credit payout of approximately \$1,530,000. This is for the remaining balance of 2002 and 2014, along with 25% of 2019. The checks will be mailed out around May 1st, 2021. If you were an active member of Runestone Telecom in any or all of these years, you should receive a check in the mail shortly. If you need to update your mailing address with us, please do so by calling our office at 320-986-2013.

When Latency is Too High, It Can Be “Game Over”

Are there online gamers in your household? If so, it’s important to understand the Internet’s role in gaming. While quick thinking and even quicker thumbs are a must, sometimes it’s the Internet connection that can make or break a performance. Upload speed is particularly valuable in gaming, since it impacts latency.



What is latency, you ask? In the world of gaming it is commonly referred to as “lag” or “ping.” Technically, it’s the round-trip time for one small data packet to travel across the Internet between two devices. In this case, it’s between a local PC or game console and a distant gaming server. Latency is usually measured using a software tool called “ping” with the results reported in milliseconds (ms) or “thousandths of a second.”

Latency requirements vary from game to game, and serious gamers will want to strive for the lowest possible latency that the environment can provide. Here are general guidelines:

Less than 20ms: This is optimal for gaming. Visuals are crisp and actions are quick. You should not experience any lags or glitches during gameplay.

20ms – 50ms: This is the most common range for gamers. You should still experience smooth and responsive gameplay.

50ms – 100ms: This is the average range for gamers who are connecting to international servers. You may experience occasional lag depending on the game and your settings.

Note that while this degree of latency and beyond is acceptable when playing online Solitaire or curling, in more demanding scenarios you’re likely to have your joystick shot off. Figuratively speaking.

100ms – 300ms: Lags and delays are common but do not completely disrupt gameplay. You’re likely to encounter dips in performance and in-game responsiveness.

More than 300ms: You’ll experience noticeable lag, long delays in response, inconsistent movements, and lost shots. Latency in this range will likely be more frustrating than rewarding.

In closing, it should be noted that end-to-end latency testing will involve many different interconnected networks and gaming servers. As any chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so it is with the Internet. A sluggish network link or an overloaded gaming server in the chain can increase overall latency and degrade the online experience.

To measure latency, as well as download and upload speeds, you can visit <https://speed.runestone.net>. For information about upgrading your Internet connection to enhance the gaming experience, call Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013.

New FCC Rules Help to Block Spoofed Robocalls

Americans receive millions of unwanted phone calls daily. These include spoofed robocalls, when a caller transmits misleading or inaccurate caller ID information to deceive recipients into thinking the call is from someone they know or can trust.

These calls are simply annoying. Robocall schemes take approximately \$10 billion from consumers in scams each year. They’re also reducing consumer confidence—by some estimates, more than half of all calls are not being answered.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) now requires all originating and terminating voice service providers to implement caller ID authentication using STIR/SHAKEN technological standards in the Internet Protocol (IP) portions of their networks by June 30, 2021. STIR/SHAKEN stands for Secure Telephone Identity Revisited (STIR) and Signature-based Handling of Asserted Information Using toKENS (SHAKEN). It requires carriers to “sign” calls they originate, preventing spoofed caller ID data and guaranteeing that the caller ID information that appears on phones is trustworthy.

New Members

Elbow Lake

Gibb, Wanda218-685-2010
Kosbab, Jerry & Linda....218-685-4881
Vold, John218-685-5175

Hoffman

Giese Farms320-986-2477

Lowry

Gulbranson, R M320-283-5751

Wendell

Myron JT218-458-2058

Get ready for **10-DIGIT DIALING** for local calls



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.



Where in Your Home Should Your Router Go?

To get the best performance from your WiFi network, it's important to place your router in the optimal location in your home. The real estate agent mantra, "Location, location, location" applies here, since the wrong location can sometimes cause the internet connection to fail or drop intermittently.

Follow these guidelines to help you find the right spot:

- **Install your router in a central location.** Routers send the signal out in all directions, so if it's left in a corner of your home, a significant percentage of your wireless coverage is being sent outside. It's best to move the router to a central location to optimize the signal. In a multi-story home, this means the main floor.
- **Avoid physical obstructions.** Don't place your router near walls made of brick, stone, or concrete. You also shouldn't place it inside a cabinet or drawer.
- **Go high.** Routers tend to spread signal downward, so it's best to mount the router as high as possible to maximize coverage. Try placing it on an upper shelf or mounting it on the wall in an inconspicuous place. Don't put it on the floor.
- **Avoid reflective surfaces.** Some WiFi signals bounce off windows, mirrors, metal file cabinets, and stainless steel countertops, lessening both network range and performance.
- **Stay away from other electronic devices.** This includes TVs, microwaves, and phones.
- **Don't settle prematurely on a location.** Try placing your router in several different promising locations and note the internet performance in each. While this trial-and-error method may not be the most scientific way to find a good spot, it can end up being an effective one.

If you have questions about moving your router, call us at 320-986-2013.