

The Connection

NOVEMBER 2021



Happy Thanksgiving to You and Yours

Runestone Telecom wishes you a wonderful Thanksgiving. May you enjoy your favorite foods surrounded by your favorite people, and may you reflect with gratitude on everything you cherish in life.

We're grateful to have you as a customer (and as a neighbor and friend). We appreciate your support of us as the local provider and are honored to help keep you connected with communication services.

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

Holiday Observed

Runestone Telecom will be closed on Thursday, November 25th and Friday, November 26th for the Thanksgiving holiday. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.

Runestone
Telecom Association



ARE YOU THIS HUNGRY
FOR *super-fast*
INTERNET?

Feast on this: Runestone Telecom offers Internet speeds to satisfy the appetites of even the most bandwidth-hungry families. And now's a great time to upgrade to a faster plan, so you'll be ready for the online activities related to Thanksgiving—researching recipes, ordering groceries, compiling playlists, reviewing Black Friday ads, planning your holiday shopping, and streaming football games and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Call 320-986-2013 now to order faster Internet.

ENJOY THE HOLIDAY AND THANKS FOR BEING A LOYAL CUSTOMER!

National Rural Health Day Celebrates the Power of Rural

The third Thursday of every November has been designated as National Rural Health Day. This is an opportunity to honor the selfless, community-minded spirit that prevails in rural America and showcase the efforts of its health care providers.

Rural communities are wonderful places to live and work, which is why an estimated 57 million people—nearly one in five Americans—call them home. These small towns and farming areas are places where neighbors tend to know each other, listen to each other, respect each other, and work together to benefit the greater good. They can also be great places for entrepreneurs to start businesses.

Along with advantages, however, rural communities can also present challenges, particularly with respect to health care. That's why it's so important to support resources including telehealth, which provide a virtual way for rural residents to meet with medical specialists located in cities miles away.

Runestone Telecom is proud to provide fast and reliable Internet to health care providers, residents, and businesses in our service area. For details on our Internet offerings, call 320-986-2013.



Online purchasing is the most common scam type reported to the Better Business Bureau (BBB). These scams typically start with a fake shopping website that offers incredible deals on well-known brands. If you order products from one of these websites, you may never receive the merchandise or you may get a shoddy, counterfeit item delivered instead. And your losses might continue. Scammers sometimes seed their phony websites with malware that infects your device and harvests personal information for use in identity theft.

Many fake shopping websites mimic trusted retailers, using familiar logos and slogans and a URL that's close to the real thing. According to the BBB, you should look for these warning signs:

- **Bargain-basement prices.** Internet security firm Norton says to be on guard if discounts exceed 55 percent.
- **Shoddy website design or sloppy English.** Real retailers take great care with their online presentation.
- **Limited or suspicious contact options.** For example, the customer-service email is a Yahoo or Gmail account, not a corporate one.
- **Slightly changed URLs.** Be suspicious if there's an odd character or extraneous punctuation mark compared to the real website's URL, such as "Amaz0n.net," which uses a zero instead of the letter "O." The same goes if there's a foreign domain or an unfamiliar domain such as ".bargain" instead of ".com" or ".net" at the end of the URL.

In addition to watching out for the signs of fake shopping websites, follow these strategies to minimize your chances of getting scammed:

- **Use trusted websites** rather than shopping with a search engine, since scammers can manipulate search results to lead you to their content.
- **Comparison shop and check prices** from multiple retailers to help determine if a deal you've seen really is too good to be true.
- **Research an unfamiliar product or brand** by search for its name with terms like "scam" or "complaint."
- **Carefully read delivery, exchange, refund, and privacy policies**, and if they're vague or nonexistent, take your business elsewhere.

While shopping online is a convenient option, don't rush through the process and focus only on getting the lowest price. If you do, you might end up with nothing but headaches.



Your Privacy Rights Regarding Customer Proprietary Network Information

Under Federal law, you have a right to—and Runestone Telecom Association (RTA) has a duty to—protect the confidentiality of Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI). This notice is to advise you of these rights and obligations, and to request that you permit RTA to use your CPNI for the purposes described here.

CPNI consists of the call, service and billing data regarding the RTA telecommunications services you buy. RTA intends to use your CPNI information to identify and offer to you other RTA communications services that we think will be of interest to you. **RTA does not sell or in any way provide this information to any other company**, other than when required by law, or at your written consent. RTA has the duty to protect the confidentiality of this information. Regardless of whether you consent or not, your account will be treated confidentially.

No action is necessary if you wish to permit RTA to use your CPNI in order to tell you about RTA services, new technologies, specials or possible savings to your account. You do have a right to disapprove RTA's use of your CPNI for the purposes described in this notice, or to withdraw your consent at any time. In order to notify RTA that you do not consent to its use of your CPNI, you must contact us at 320-986-2013 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Your disapproval for the use of your CPNI will not affect RTA's provision of the services you now purchase from RTA. You have the right at any time to withdraw your approval or to give your approval if you previously denied approval. Until you notify RTA of your change, your permission or denial of permission remains valid.

New Members

Elbow Lake

Millers Fresh Foods..... 218-685-4221

Hoffman

Thorstad, Sylvia 320-986-2332

Winter, Nancy 320-986-2622

CLEC

Lake Valley Dental 320-563-4800

Wymore, Bruce..... 320-763-9490

Hoffman

Hutchings, Robert 320-986-2102

Norcross

Fystrom, Thomas C. 320-284-2489

Wendell

Christenson Farms 218-458-2196

Neubauer, J. 218-458-2445

Rosin, Greg 218-458-2471

Change Coming to the Lifeline Program on December 1st

The FCC has ordered a change in the federal Lifeline program. Lifeline discounts continue to be available to qualifying customers on voice and broadband services, but the discount for voice only service will no longer be available effective December 1st, 2021.

Customers interested in determining if they are eligible for the Lifeline program, or who want to apply, should visit www.lifelinesupport.org for more information.



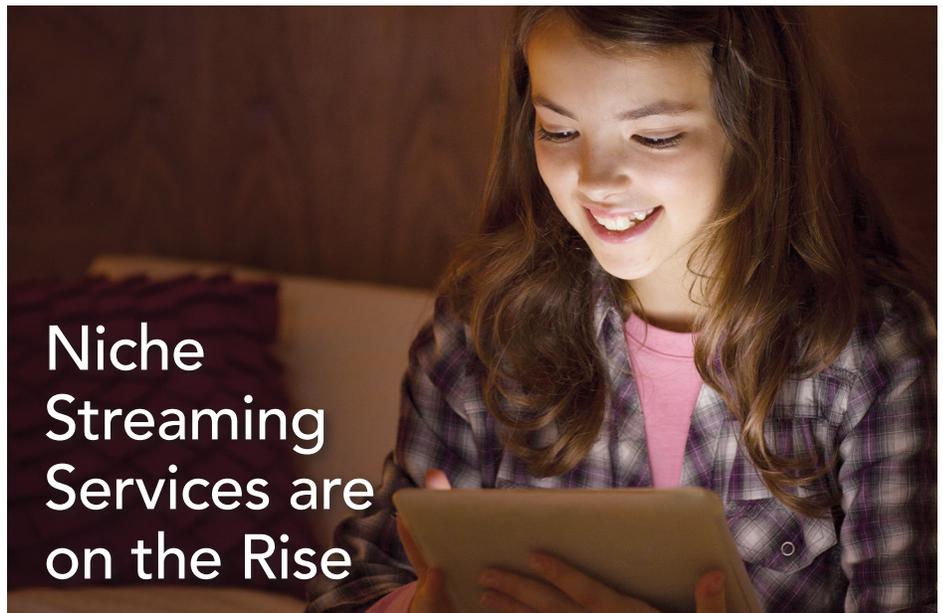
This Year, Small Business Saturday is Extra Important

The pandemic resulted in huge damage to small businesses in the U.S., with many being forced to close either temporarily or permanently. That's why it's essential to support the remaining small businesses as much as possible, and doing your holiday gift-buying on Small Business Saturday is a great way to do that.

Started in 2010 by American Express, Small Business Saturday takes place yearly on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. So make plans now to "shop 'til you drop" at local retailers on November 27th, 2021. While you're out and about, be sure to patronize local coffee shops and restaurants as well.

But why stop there? American Express has expanded its focus to amplify the impact small businesses have in communities all year, and is actively encouraging people to support small businesses as part of their regular routine. The company began a new "Let's Go Shop Small" summer-long campaign in 2021.

Runestone Telecom has always been a big supporter of small businesses and hopes you are as well. Together, we can make a difference.



Niche Streaming Services are on the Rise

While the big names in streaming—including Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney Plus+, and Hulu—probably come to mind first, niche streaming services are growing more quickly and getting an increasing share of the traffic.

Examples in the niche streaming services category include the following:

Acorn – The focus is on streaming the best of British television, with shows such as *Doc Martin*.

BET+ – Its TV shows, movies, and specials feature black culture, including the complete Tyler Perry collection.

BroadwayHD – It lets theater fans stream a wide variety of stage performances.

Crunchroll, Funimation, and RetroCrush – These three streaming services are all completely devoted to anime, which is Japanese animation.

Curiosity Stream – Subscribers have access to thousands of documentaries for less than \$20/year.

Documentary Plus+ – This free streaming service has a small, but high-quality catalog of documentaries. It launched in January 2021.

Kanopy – A streaming platform with a focus on education, Kanopy is free to use for students or patrons of cooperating public libraries.

Screambox and Shudder – It's scary how popular these streaming services are with fans of horror films.

Toon Googles – Expect lots of fun cartoons and kids' shows with Toon Googles.

No matter which streaming services you enjoy at home, you'll want to make sure your Internet connection is fast enough to provide a trouble-free streaming experience. Call Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013 to ask about a speed upgrade.