

# The Connection

DECEMBER 2021



## We Hope Your Days are Merry and Bright

Merry Christmas from all of us at Runestone Telecom. May this season be filled with whatever brings you joy —whether that's baking and sharing cookies, shopping for the perfect presents, enjoying holiday feasts with family, decorating your home from top to bottom, or giving back to the community through your time and talents.

We're honored to help keep you connected to your world.

### 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](mailto:rtaoffice@runestone.net)

Visit Us: [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net)

### Holiday Observed

Runestone Telecom will be closed on Thursday, December 23rd and Friday, December 24th for the Christmas holiday. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.

**Runestone**  
Telecom Association



A WINTER WONDERLAND CREATES

*Wonderful Speed*

## Enjoy Wonderful Speed from Your Internet Too

It's more fun to move faster, whether you're sledding down a snowy hill or flying through downloads at home. So why not give your family the gift of faster Internet this holiday season? It's sure to make the new year more wonderful for the binge watchers, gamers, teleworkers, and students in your household.

**We offer Internet speeds up to 1,000\* Mbps!**

**CALL 320-986-2013 TO SIGN UP FOR  
NEW OR UPGRADED INTERNET.**

\*Speed availability varies depending on location. Contact us for details.

## New Members

### Barrett

Graybar, Marlene..... 320-528-2233

### Elbow Lake

Arroyo, Carl..... 218-685-3197

ECS Ag Services ..... 218-685-7637

Productive

Ag Services ..... 218-685-7639

Quernemoen,

Samuel & Lauren ..... 218-685-5150

Sannes-Venhuizen,

Jeremy ..... 218-685-3014

Stonybrook Seeds ..... 218-685-7638

### Hoffman

Hagen, Ashton..... 320-986-2115

Starner, M..... 320-986-4488

### CLEC

Carter, Geraldine..... 320-763-7380

Haase, Bridget..... 320-759-1180

Hill, N M ..... 320-677-2865

Oachs, Mary (Peg) ..... 320-677-2462

### Lowry

Steidl,

Logan & Megan..... 320-283-2219

### Norcross

Kjsebo, Brian..... 320-284-2226

## Lifeline Update

In our November 2021 newsletter, we informed you that the Lifeline discount for voice only service would no longer be available after December 1st, 2021. The FCC has ordered a one-year pause in the discontinuation of Lifeline support for voice only. This pause will last until December 1st, 2022.

**Customers interested in determining if they are eligible for the Lifeline program, or who want to apply, should visit [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org) for more information.**

# Joker Malware Warning for Android Users

This is no joke. Joker malware was first detected in 2017, and after coming and going since then, is making a resurgence in 2021. This malware is dangerous as it infiltrates your phone or other device through malicious code hiding in Android apps. It can operate in the background and steal personal information, access and copy your contact list, and monitor your text messages — all without your knowledge.

Based on this stolen data, Joker malware can interact with advertisement websites and subscribe you to premium services. You may not notice anything until unauthorized charges show up on your credit card statement.

## Apps that have been confirmed to have Joker malware include:

- Auxiliary Message
- Element Scanner
- Fast Magic SMS
- Free CamScanner
- Go Messages
- Super Message
- Super SMS
- Travel Wallpapers
- Private SMS
- Hummingbird PDF Converter – Photo to PDF
- Style Photo Collage
- Talent Photo Editor – Blur focus
- Paper Doc Scanner
- All Good PDF Scanner
- Care Message
- Part Message
- Blue Scanner
- Direct Messenger
- Tangram App Lock
- One Sentence Translator – Multifunctional Translator
- Mint Leaf Message – Your Private Message
- Unique Keyboard – Fancy Fonts & Free Emoticons
- Desire Translate
- Meticulous Scanner



These apps have been removed from the Google Play Store since they were hiding Joker malware. **If you have any of these apps on your devices, delete them immediately.**

To find and delete apps on an Android device: 1. Open the **Google Play Store** app. 2. At the top right, tap the **profile** icon. 3. Tap **Manage apps & devices** and then **Installed**. 4. Go through the list of displayed applications. 5. Next to the app you want to remove, tap **Uninstall**.

# You May Get Better Sleep if You Put Your Phone Away

Do you keep your phone by your bed? Do you check it before falling asleep and again when you wake during the night? You may want to change this routine to help achieve deeper, more restful sleep.

**There are two main reasons why phones can interfere with the sleep process:**

**Phones don't let your mind relax.** They're designed to feed you information—news headlines, social media posts, emails, texts, and more. So even if your body is comfy and cozy under the blanket, checking your phone can trick your brain into thinking it needs to stay awake. Scrolling through your phone's content is also likely to stir up a variety of emotions, from joy at seeing happy news, to anxiety, fear, or anger about troubling world events. These emotions can distract you from much needed sleep.

What's more, given that many phone apps are meant to keep us connected and elicit immediate responses, you may be tempted to reply to that message or comment on that post. This can lead you "down the rabbit hole" of continued phone usage, and before you know it, an hour or more has gone by.

**Blue light from the screen can disrupt your internal sleep-wake cycle.**

Since it's designed to mimic daylight, blue light might confuse your body clock into thinking it's still daytime and to stay awake rather than fall asleep.

Blue light also suppresses melatonin, the hormone that helps control the sleep-wake cycle and makes us feel drowsy. When your body does not produce enough melatonin, you may experience insomnia, tiredness, and irritability.

## New Internet Pricing Coming December 1st, 2021

We have an early Christmas gift for you! For everyone who subscribes to 20-30 Mbps Internet or higher, your Internet bill will be decreasing starting December 1st, 2021. Plus, the price for Internet Only and Internet & Phone services will be the same. We hope this will make it more cost effective for you to jump up to that next higher speed, if necessary, to meet the Internet demands of your household this holiday season.

Internet Speed	Internet & Phone (Prior to 12/1/21)	Internet Only (Prior to 12/1/21)	Internet & Phone OR Internet Only (After 12/1/21)
10-15 Mbps	\$72.59	\$86.95	\$72.95
20-30 Mbps	\$82.59	\$91.95	\$75.95
40-50 Mbps	\$90.59	\$99.95	\$79.95
75-100 Mbps	\$121.59	\$130.95	\$99.95
250-300 Mbps	\$146.59	\$155.95	\$129.95
500-1,000 Mbps	\$170.59	\$179.95	\$159.95

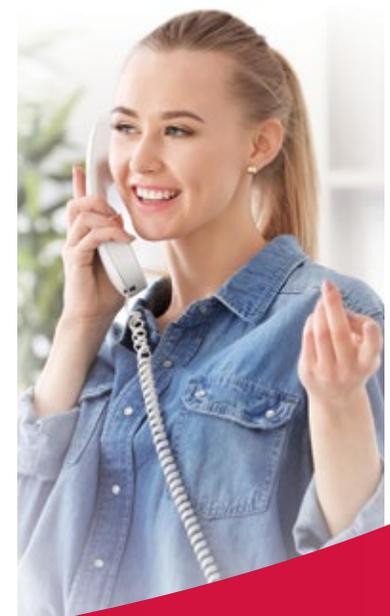
## Your Friendly Reminder of National Call a Friend Day

National Call a Friend Day is December 28th, during the relatively quiet period after Christmas is over and before New Year's Day arrives. It was created in 2019 to encourage people to reconnect with friends they haven't spoken with in awhile.

It's easy to understand how friends can lose touch. Our lives get hectic between the demands of work, family, and other activities, so maintaining friendships may end up at the bottom of your list of priorities. National Call a Friend Day is an extra incentive to pick up the phone and call that person you've been meaning to get back in touch with one of these days.

You don't have to limit yourself to only friends you've completely lost touch with. National Call a Friend Day is also a great time to call friends instead of your usual written form of communication, whether that's texts, emails, or chat messages.

**Runestone Telecom believes in the power of the human voice. Call us at 320-986-2013 if you'd like more information about our voice services.**



## All But the Tiniest Houses Need Big Internet Speeds

Houses made of gingerbread, frosting, and candies can get by on their sweet looks alone. But the houses we actually live in are filled with all kinds of Internet-connected devices requiring big Internet speeds.

To help determine if your house could use an Internet speed upgrade, consider these factors:

- **Number of Internet users** - Include not only your family members but frequent visitors and house guests, if applicable.
- **Typical online activities** - For each user, note their online activities such as streaming movies and TV shows, video calls, social media, online gaming, working or learning from home, and so on. How many of these activities occur simultaneously on an average day?
- **Number of devices** - Add up the total number of computers, tablets, smartphones, gaming consoles, streaming devices, smart appliances, and smart home or security devices. If you're like most households, this number has increased significantly in recent years.

**Need more help determining which speed is right for you? Use our easy Bandwidth Helper tool at [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net).**

## Jingle Bells Telethon

The 73rd Annual Jingle Bells Telethon will be aired on Runestone Cable TV channel 6 on December 11th starting at 5 p.m. You can also watch the event live on the website: [www.jinglebellsalexandria.org](http://www.jinglebellsalexandria.org).

## Tech the Halls to Simplify Your Holiday

Smart home devices can reduce the stress of the holiday season by taking some of the tasks off your to-do list. Are you taking full advantage of this handy technology?

### Holiday Light Control

If you love to brighten your home inside and out with what seems like miles of light strands, you know what a hassle it can be to plug and unplug them each day. Save yourself the trouble by using smart plugs in your electrical outlets. You can control smart plugs via your mobile device or smart speaker, or program them to turn on and off automatically according to your schedule. While you're at it, consider swapping out your regular light bulbs in lamps and ceiling fixtures with smart bulbs. They offer color-changing capabilities to light up walls and décor for a more festive mood.



### Doorbell Cameras

You'll probably have more visitors and more packages at your front door this time of year. By installing a doorbell camera, you can stay updated on what's happening with both. These cameras allow you to view and chat with porch visitors through a smartphone app — whether you're on the other side of the door or the other side of the country. They can also alert you when a package is dropped off, so you can grab it yourself, or call a neighbor to do it for you. Plus, just the sight of a doorbell camera on a front porch may deter package thefts.

### Voice-Enabled Smart Speakers

A smart speaker is like a "digital elf" that can handle all kinds of tasks. For example, the Amazon Echo can create multiple shopping lists (for gifts, party supplies, and more), schedule reminders, track an airline flight, play a Christmas carol for you, or even order a last-minute gift.

### Housework Helpers

Get help managing your home. Robot vacuum cleaners and mops can automatically clean up messes, and smart refrigerators can alert you when the door is left open, and tell you what's inside so you know what food to pick up at the store.

**Runestone Telecom offers the high-speed Internet plans you need to support smart home devices. To learn more, visit [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net).**