

The Connection

APRIL 2022



Devices Multiplying Like Rabbits?

Happy Easter from Runestone Telecom and welcome to the spring season! If you have more Internet-connected devices around your house than you did last year at this time, you may need to upgrade your connection to keep up with demand. So, hop to it and call us at 320-986-2013. We'll make sure you get the speed you need.



FUSC Rate Change

The FUSC (Federal Universal Service Contribution) is set to decrease from 25.2% to 23.8% on April 1, 2022.

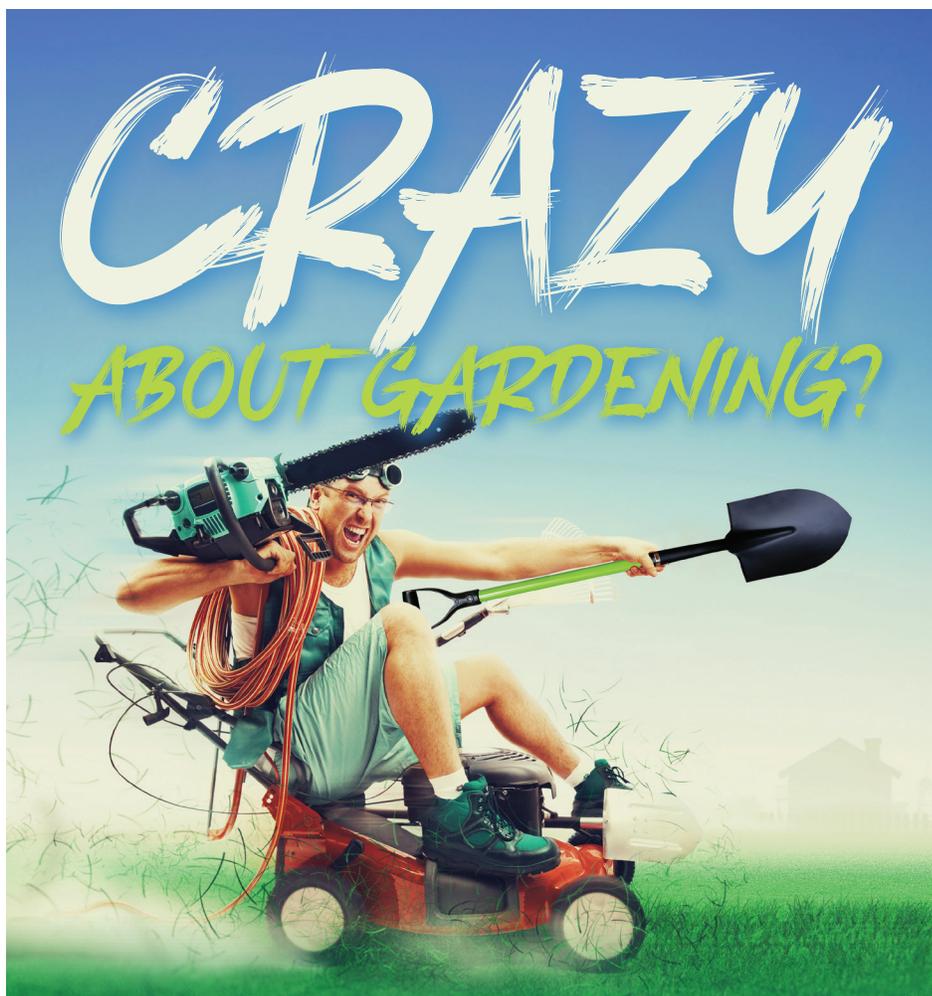
Contact Us

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CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG!

We know you're itching to plant your garden and maybe add a shrub or two. But don't get ahead of yourself. First, you need to call 811 to have utility lines marked.

Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you'll be doing. The affected local utilities will send a locator to your property, free of charge. Then you'll know what's below and be able to dig safely without causing damage.

THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Are You Having Trouble Using the Telephone Due to a Hearing or Speech Disability?

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: 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 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/sprintrelay.

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 voice synthesizer. The communications assistant revoices 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.

For More Information on Minnesota Relay Services

www.mnrelay.org • 1-800-657-3775

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.

To File a Complaint Regarding Minnesota Relay

1-800-657-3775

Email: mn.relay@state.mn.us

You will need to provide: the date and time of the relay call, the calling from and to phone numbers, the CA's identification number, and the nature of your complaint.

You also file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission consumercomplaints.fcc.gov

Voice: 1-888-225-5322

TTY: 1-888-835-5322

ASL via VP: 1-844-432-2275

Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

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.

mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing

Voice: 1-800-657-3663

ASL via VP: 651-964-1514

Annual Notice of Lifeline Program and Telephone Assistance Plan

You may be eligible for help paying your telephone bill through these two programs:

The Lifeline Program is a federal one which offers a monthly discount up to \$9.25 on some landline telephone service plans and/or Internet plans. Lifeline also offers discounts on some wireless telephone service plans and some broadband Internet service plans. You may receive the Lifeline discount on one service per household. The definition of a household is anyone living at an address—including children, relatives, or people not related to you—who share income(s) and household expenses.

Minnesota's Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) offers a monthly credit of \$10.00 on your landline telephone service. You can receive the TAP credit on one landline per household.

Qualifications

The telephone or broadband service must be in your name. You must show proof that you or a member of your household participates in at least one of the following programs or is income eligible:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs

If you do not participate in any of the programs listed above, you may qualify if your income is at or below 135% of the 2022 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines:

Household Size	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Territories
1	\$18,347
2	\$24,719
3	\$31,091
4	\$37,463
5	\$43,835
6	\$50,207
7	\$56,579
8	\$62,951
For each additional person, add: \$6,372	

Application

To apply online, go to checklifeline.org. If you would like a paper application, contact Runestone Telecom. One application may be used to apply for both the Lifeline Program and TAP. Return the paper application and proof of eligibility to: USAC Lifeline Support Center, PO Box 7081, London, KY 40742. It can take up to two months for discounts to appear on your bill. Discounts cannot be applied to past-due bills. You must pay the phone bill until that time.

It's Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month—a reminder for all of us to keep our eyes on the road and our minds focused on the demands of driving.

Distracted driving is a widespread hazard. According to the National Safety Council, more than 700 people in the U.S. are injured daily in crashes caused by distracted driving. This can mean the driver was engaged in activities including:

- Having a phone conversation—handheld, hands-free, or via Bluetooth
- Using voice-to-text features in the vehicle's dashboard system
- Using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Vimeo, or other social media
- Checking or sending emails
- Taking selfies or filming videos
- Inputting destinations into GPS—while the vehicle is in motion

Consider this scenario: If you look at your phone for 3.5 seconds while going 60 miles an hour, your eyes will be blind to the road while you drive the length of a football field.

Please keep yourself and others safe, and #justdrive.

New Members

Barrett

Beckman, Dennis320-528-2052
Holden, Rich320-528-2034

Herman

Herman Auto Repair.....320-677-3330

Hoffman

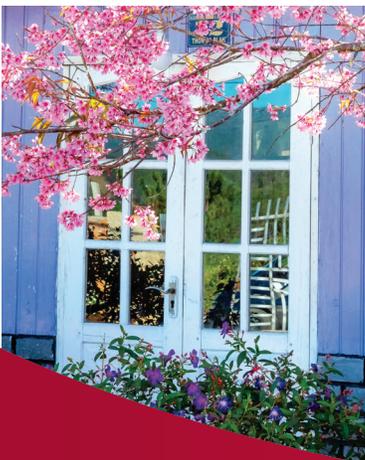
Johnson, L F320-986-2372

It's Time to Spring into Action

Warmer weather means it's time to do the spring maintenance tasks your home needs. Here are some ideas to include on your to-do list:

- **Check the roof and exterior walls.** Cracked or missing shingles should be replaced. Whether you have wood siding, stucco, or brick, look for damaged areas, especially under eaves and near gutter downspouts.
- **Prep the AC.** Change the filter, check hose connections for leaks, and make sure the drain pans are draining freely.
- **Repair damaged window screens.** Even the smallest tear in a screen can let dozens of mosquitoes and flies into your home.
- **Inspect outdoor cushion covers.** Indoor/outdoor cushions and pillows take a beating. If they're still in good condition, wash them. If not, get new ones.
- **Re-caulk windows and doors.** Maintaining a properly sealed house helps keep the cool air in, which means lower energy bills.

This can also be a good time of year to spring forward with updated technology for your home. Visit www.runestone.net to see the selection of Internet, phone, and TV plans we offer.



Take a Look at the Future of WiFi

WiFi is one of the most widely adopted technologies around the world, and the future of WiFi is a bright one. Our connected lifestyles, plus the growth of smart cities and the Internet of Things (IoT), will make WiFi increasingly important in the years ahead.

According to NCTA – The Internet & Television Association, more than half of U.S. Internet traffic transits a WiFi network, and WiFi contributes \$500 billion annually to the economy. Given the amount of economic and social activity taking place over WiFi, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) took steps to make sure this technology can keep up with demand.

The FCC voted in April 2020 to enable unlicensed WiFi to use the entire 1,200 Megahertz of the 6-GHz band, freeing up additional spectrum to support all of the activities that people rely on WiFi to offer, such as streaming, gaming, and surfing, as well as video chats and telemedicine. Prior to that ruling, fresh unlicensed spectrum appropriate for WiFi had been unavailable for well over a decade.

In November 2020, the FCC further improved the spectrum outlook for WiFi when it opened up the lower portion of the underutilized 5.9 GHz band for indoor unlicensed use. This small slice of spectrum, when joined with an adjacent WiFi band, creates a wide-bandwidth, next-generation WiFi channel (160 MHz) to deliver better WiFi to American consumers in their homes, workplaces, and schools.

Future spectrum policy decisions are likely to be forward-looking, considering not just what WiFi might look like in five years, but what it will take for service providers to continue to deliver outstanding WiFi and the next unlicensed innovations 10-15 years from now.

How's your home WiFi working for you today? Fast and reliable Internet service is essential to a high-performing home WiFi network. Visit www.runestone.net for details on our speeds and prices.