

The Connection

JUNE 2022

Runestone Telecom Annual Meeting

The 72nd Annual Meeting of Runestone Telecom Association will be held on Wednesday, July 13th at West Central Area School in Barrett at 7 pm. Please save the date and plan to join us.

Please Review Us on Google

We encourage you to post reviews of Runestone Telecom on Google. Tell us what you enjoy most about your customer experience or share suggestions on what we could do to make things even better. Thanks for your feedback—it helps guide our decisions.



TV Channel Change

AntennaTV has been replaced by getTV on Channel 18.3. It features classic movies and TV shows.

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

Find Us:   



FEEL
LIKE A
Kid
AGAIN

FASTER INTERNET IS LIKE A NEW TOY

Remember how thrilled you were when you got a new scooter or remote-controlled car? Feel like a kid again by treating yourself to a new Internet plan.

With speeds up to 1,000 Mbps*, you can play through your day with “I can’t wait to show this off to my friends” excitement.

**CALL 320-986-2013 TO GET ROLLING
WITH NEW INTERNET**

**HAPPY FATHER’S DAY TO ALL THE
KID-AT-HEART DADS.**

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

Before You Dig, Know What's Below

There could be many things below ground in your yard besides earth worms. It's also where utility lines are located, including the infrastructure for electricity, water, sewer, gas/petroleum, and communications. Part of the communications infrastructure in this community is the fiber optic network installed by Runestone Telecom.

Before you begin any digging project, call 811 to get utility lines located and marked for free. All utilities in your area will be notified to come and mark the location of their lines. When you call, be prepared to pinpoint the location of your dig site and describe the type of work to be done. Remember to call at least two business days before you dig.

Do you ever wonder what the color of the paint and flags used by the locators mean? Here's the universal color code:

- **Orange** – Communications, Telephone/CATV
- **Red** – Electric
- **Blue** – Potable Water
- **Green** – Sewer/Drainage
- **Yellow** – Gas/Petroleum Pipe Line
- **Purple** – Reclaimed Water
- **White** – Premark site of intended excavation

It's really very simple: Don't pick up the shovel until you pick up the phone. Call 811 and know what's below.



June is Great Outdoors Month

Great Outdoors Month is a yearly reminder to go out and explore all that nature has to offer in the United States—including ocean coastlines, lakes, rivers, forests, mountains, hills, deserts, and prairies. We encourage you to set aside some time in June to explore the great outdoors, whether in a national park or in your own backyard.

Why do we love Great Outdoors Month? Because it's a multifaceted celebration:

- **It's a celebration of nature.** Taking part in outdoor activities allows us to learn about the natural environment of the area, such as its wildlife, plants, and climate. It can also help us rededicate ourselves to conserving our natural spaces for our own well-being, and for the health, safety, prosperity, and fulfillment of generations to come.
- **It's a celebration of economic growth.** While the primary goal of Great Outdoors Month is to take a break from the daily grind of our work lives to explore the outdoors, the event has also aided in the creation of millions of jobs in the growing outdoor recreation industry and significantly boosted the U.S. economy.
- **It's a celebration of adventure.** Indoor spaces tend to give us a sense of safety and familiarity, and we're surrounded by creature comforts. But the outdoors is all about the excitement of discovering new places and meeting the challenges of weather changes and rough terrain. Being outside can lead to a real adrenaline rush!

If you're looking for ideas for Great Outdoors Month, consider visiting a new-to-you hiking trail while on vacation or during a weekend getaway. Our country is blessed with almost 60,000 miles of trails, including recreational and national historic ones. They enable you and your family to get great exercise while seeing spectacular views.

When you're enjoying the great outdoors in your own backyard, enhance the experience with a fast and reliable WiFi connection for streaming movies and more. Call 320-986-2013 and ask about our Whole Home WiFi.

Smishing Attacks Take Advantage of Texting Habits

Smishing is short for SMS phishing. It combines SMS (which stands for “short message service” or texting) with phishing (scams designed to steal your data). Smishing is to text messages what phishing is to emails.

Here’s how smishing typically works: You receive a text on your phone with a message that appears to be serious and needing immediate attention. For example, the text may say your debit card has been suspended, or there’s abnormal activity or a new user on your bank account. Sometimes scammers take the opposite approach, and promise you a gift card, cash back, or some other reward.

The goal of smishing attacks is to trick you into immediately clicking a link by saying bad things will happen if you don’t. That link will take you to a fraudulent website, and if you enter your username and password there, the scammers could steal your money or your entire identity.

Why are smishing attacks on the rise? One reason is that they’re easy to execute. All scammers need are phone numbers and a tricky way to get people to respond to the texts. Working in their favor is the fact that people love texts, and most texts are opened and responded to within a few minutes. By comparison, the average open rate for emails is only about 10-20 percent.

Should you get a suspicious text, don’t reply. Don’t even text “stop.” Any kind of communication tells the scammer that your phone number is active and makes you ripe for targeting again.

You can reduce the number of these texts you receive by setting up spam filters. For an iPhone, go to the Settings app, tap Messages, find the Filter Unknown Senders option, and turn it on by swiping the button to the right. For an Android phone, go to the Messaging app, tap the three dots icon in the upper right of the screen, choose Settings, tap Spam Protection, and turn on Enable Spam Protection by swiping the button to the right. If your Android phone doesn’t offer the Spam Protection option, consider installing one of the many spam blocker apps on the market.



Our Crew is Busy with Fiber Work

The Runestone Telecom crew has started this season’s plow work and our technicians are busy! Give them a wave and a smile when you see them. After all, they’re helping to bring you super-fast Internet.

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/runestonetecom to watch how one of our technicians uses fusion to splice a fiber optic cable.

New Members

Alexandria

Clasen, Cheryl320-554-7541

Clinton

Big Stone Lumber.....320-325-5234

Cyrus

Berg, Herbert S320-795-2504

Elbow Lake

Helseth, Dennis J218-685-4170

Ritter, Bobbie & Peter....218-685-2191

Schneeberger,

Dean & Gail.....218-685-5240

Herman

Big Whitey’s Bar & Grill..320-677-2345

Hoffman

Spaulding, Robert.....320-986-2030

Lowry

O’Malley,

Terrence & Arlene320-283-5870

Wendell

Biss, Wayne & JoAnn.....218-458-2429

Wheaton

Olson,

Randall E & Mary M320-422-2443

Fighting Robocalls Compared to a Game of Whack-a-Mole

The arcade game Whack-a-Mole is often used to describe a situation characterized by a series of repetitious and futile tasks, where the successful completion of one task just results in another popping up elsewhere. Attempts to fight against robocalls fall into this category.

Like a game of Whack-a-Mole, whenever industry regulators or law enforcement smack down on one way of making robocalls, scammers change tactics and use a different method. This is currently happening as robocallers move away from using spoofed phone numbers made to look like a call is coming from a neighbor. Now they're buying lists of real phone numbers to trick spam-blocking software into letting the calls through.

Scamming people is a lucrative business, which is why robocallers work so hard to stay one step ahead of the regulations and technology designed to stop them. But the FCC continues to address the issue.

"With coordinated activity—with many more mallets smacking this problem—we're going to be more capable of bringing it to a stop," FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel said.



Affordable Connectivity Program Helps Households Connect

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford Internet service. It provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service for eligible households. The ACP benefit is non-transferrable and limited to one monthly Internet discount.

A household is eligible if one member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Participates in one of several Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal Head Start (only households meeting the relevant income qualifying standard) Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income program.

If the ACP ends, or when a household is no longer eligible, customers will be subject to the provider's regular internet rates, terms, and conditions.

There are two steps to enroll:

1. Go to [ACPBenefit.org](https://www.fcc.gov/ACP) to submit an application or print out a mail-in application.
2. Contact your preferred participating provider to select a plan and have the discount applied to your bill.

Some providers may ask you to complete an alternative application. Additional information about the ACP is available at [fcc.gov/ACP](https://www.fcc.gov/ACP), or by calling 877-384-2575. You can also call Runestone Telecom Association, as a participating provider, at 320-986-2013 to learn more.

Watch Your Mailbox for a Capital Credit Check!

The Runestone Telecom Board of Directors approved a capital credit payout of approximately \$1,200,000. This is for the remaining balance of 2003 and 10% of 2020. The checks will be mailed out around June 1st, 2022. If you were an active member of Runestone Telecom during these years, you should receive a check in the mail shortly.