

# The Connection

FEBRUARY 2024



## A Leap Year Offers an Extra Day to Play

As a leap year, 2024 has 366 days. What will you do with the bonus day of February 29th? Consider planning an activity with friends or family that you'll remember and talk about years from now. It doesn't have to be crazy or expensive, just memorable. After all, a chance like this only comes around every four years!

### Contact Us

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

Find Us:   

Review Us  
on Google

Please let others know about your experience as a Runestone Telecom customer. Scan this code and leave a review on Google. Thanks!



**Runestone**  
Telecom Association

You'll love how fast our internet  
**MOO-VES**

## It's udder nonsense to put up with slow speeds

What's a cow doing in this Internet message, you ask? We could say it's because cows wear smart collars or ear tags — as part of the Internet of Things — to track their vital signs and location. However, the real reason is we couldn't resist the fun of cow pun after cow pun.

Cow much longer are you going to limp along with too-slow Internet? Get moo-ing and sign up for one of our super-fast Internet plans for better streaming, gaming, and more. (Yes, we're milking this for all it's worth.)

**CALL 320-986-2013  
FOR FASTER INTERNET**  
Happy Valentine's Day!





## Updates on Cable TV Lineup and Rates

### Channel Changes

- **Exiting channels**  
Twist, Channel 17.5 and Circle, Channel 15.5 have left our lineup.
- **Confirmed channels**  
Negotiations have been completed with these channels, which will remain in our lineup: Channel 11 (KARE), Channel 17.1 (KARE HD), Channel 17.2 (Court TV), Channel 17.3 (True Crime Network), and Channel 17.4 (Quest).

### Effective March 1st

Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN) will move to channel 14.1 and KONC will be placed where TBN was on channel 21.

### Rate Increases

Effective March 1st, 2024, Runestone Cable TV's Broadcast will go from \$38.85 to \$42.82, and Basic will go from \$90.85 to \$98.01. We try to keep rates as low as possible, but the price we must pay for popular channels keeps rising, so changes were needed.

## Applications Now Open for MTA Foundation Scholarships

The MTA Foundation will award seven scholarships to high school seniors graduating in 2024. Each scholarship will be a one-time amount of \$2,000 or \$3,000. There are two types of scholarships this year:

1. **One \$3,000 Jon Tollefson Technology Scholarship:** To be eligible, applicants must be a high school senior with plans to major in either Telecommunications or Information Technology (IT) at a university, college, or technical college and be a Minnesota resident.
2. **One of six \$2,000 General Scholarships:** To be eligible, applicants must be a high school senior with plans to attend post-secondary education at a university, college, or technical college, be a Minnesota resident, and be in a family that subscribes to at least one service from an MTA member company.

*Note: The Bud Morrow Scholarship will be awarded to the highest-scoring applicant in this category and receive an additional \$1,000.*

Please visit [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net) and refer to the Scholarships banner for links to scholarship applications and more details. Applications must be returned to Runestone Telecom Association no later than February 16th, 2024.

## How Does Netflix Know What Titles to Recommend?

Netflix is an extremely data-driven company, which is why it's able to personalize your home screen with the shows and movies you're most likely to enjoy. Everything from the row categories to the thumbnail images have been carefully selected to help you find what to watch next with minimal effort. According to Netflix, this personalization is based on factors including:

- Your viewing history and how you rated other titles
- Other Netflix users with similar tastes and preferences
- Information about the titles, such as their genre, categories, actors, release year, etc.
- The time of day you watch
- The devices you use to watch
- How long you watch



All these pieces of data are used as inputs that Netflix processes in its algorithms. The recommendations system does not include demographic information (such as age or gender) as part of the decision-making process.

**If buffering is an issue while watching Netflix or other streaming services, call 320-986-2013 and ask about an Internet speed upgrade.**

# Lifeline Lowers Communications Costs for Qualifying Households

Lifeline is a federal program to help low-income subscribers stay connected by providing a monthly discount of at least \$9.25 on their wireline phone, wireless phone, or broadband internet service. You can only receive this discount for one service per household — either phone or internet, but not both. A household is defined as a group of people who live together and share income and expenses.

Lifeline is available to eligible low-income subscribers in every U.S. state, territory, commonwealth, and on Tribal lands.

This program launched in 1985 to provide discounts on phone services. In 2016, internet services were added in recognition of our digitally connected economy. Lifeline discounts on internet service can be crucial to unlocking the internet's economic benefits for disadvantaged households, since research consistently finds low incomes stand alongside less education and older age as the strongest indicators of lower subscription rates.

## There are two ways to qualify for Lifeline:

### 1. Your household's income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

You'll find a chart with this information for households of different sizes here:  
[www.lifelinesupport.org/lis/do-i-qualify/federal-poverty-guidelines.aspx](http://www.lifelinesupport.org/lis/do-i-qualify/federal-poverty-guidelines.aspx)

### 2. You, your dependent, or a member of your household participate in at least one of these assistance programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid; Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA), Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension, Other Programs for Tribal Lands including Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance, Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Tribal Head Start, and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Visit [www.lifelinesupport.org/lis/do-i-qualify/default.aspx#programs](http://www.lifelinesupport.org/lis/do-i-qualify/default.aspx#programs) to get additional details about Lifeline qualifications and learn how to prove your income or assistance program participation. If you think your household qualifies for a Lifeline discount, you can apply online or by asking for an application from Runestone Telecom or another participating company.



## Simplify Bill Paying With eBill and AutoPay

Are you still paying your Runestone Telecom bill by writing a check and mailing it to us? Switch to eBill and pay electronically to enjoy these benefits:

- **More Security** – Paper bills leave you vulnerable to sensitive information being stolen from the mailbox or garbage can and used for identity theft.
- **Lower Costs** – You won't have to buy as many postage stamps or checks.
- **Less Time Required** – You can pay online in seconds with eBill.

For an even faster option, choose AutoPay and we'll automatically deduct your bill amount on the 20th of the month from the account you designate. There is no charge, AutoPay is free to use.

Visit [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net) and follow the instructions to sign up. Call 320-986-2013 if you need help.

## See Current Channels on the TV Guide

You can always find the most up to date show listings on our website at [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net)>Cable Television>Additional Services>TV Guide or scan this QR code to go directly to the TV Guide.

You may also opt to purchase a subscription directly from [www.tvguidemagazine.com](http://www.tvguidemagazine.com).



## New Members

### Cyrus

Wohlens, Jan ..... 320-795-2793

### Lowry

Radil, Dean..... 320-283-2008

Radil, Samuel ..... 320-283-5541



## Tech Tips for WiFi

Place your router in the most central location in your home. Since the WiFi signal goes out in all directions, this will help all your devices receive the best signal possible. Also make sure your router is in a clear area, safe from pets and small children, and is kept free of dust and dirt.



## You Can Become a Runestone Telecom Director

This year there will be a director elected for a five-year term on Runestone Telecom's Board of Directors from District 4 (Kensington, Holmes City, Alexandria). If you're a member from this District and are interested in running for this position, please submit a petition signed by at least 10 other members. The petition form can be obtained at our office or from our website. Please visit [runestone.net](http://runestone.net) and click on "The Cooperative" for more information including the qualifications to be a director and the definition of members in the By-Laws.

If there's a contested race, directors are elected by ballot and the winner is announced at the Annual Meeting. Completed petitions are accepted between January 19th, 2024 and March 19th, 2024.

## WiFi is Celebrating 25 Years in 2024



WiFi is one of the greatest technology success stories of the high-tech era, which began in earnest in 1999. During that year, Steve Jobs famously introduced consumers to WiFi by passing the new iBook laptop through a hula hoop to show off its wireless Internet connection. We no longer had to be tethered to a cord to be online!

It was also in 1999 when WiFi Alliance was established to provide multi-vendor interoperability for wireless networking products and deliver a better connectivity experience. WiFi Alliance coined the term "WiFi" and created its yin-yang logo to establish a consumer-friendly way to identify the new technology.

This year, WiFi is celebrating 25 years as an integral part of our lives at home, at work, and virtually everywhere else we go. Private WiFi networks and public hotspots offer convenient Internet access to mobile devices such as our laptops, tablets, and phones. Current encryption technologies make WiFi secure, keeping out most unwanted intruders from wireless communications.

As WiFi became faster and more sophisticated, the devices connected to it got "smarter." Thanks in part to WiFi, we're now enjoying all kinds of smart home appliances and other devices including smart thermostats, security cameras, video doorbells, speakers, refrigerators, and more. It's all part of a phenomenon known as the Internet of Things (IoT), where consumer electronics and computing devices become interconnected and exchange information. WiFi.org refers to IoT as "one of the most exciting waves of innovation the world has witnessed" and predicts "its potential has only just begun to emerge."

We don't expect you to bake a cake for WiFi and put 25 candles on it. However, the next time you look at the WiFi icon on your device, think about all the innovators since 1999 who helped make it possible.

**If you'd rather not deal with home WiFi network setup, troubleshooting, and updates on your own, sign up for Runestone Telecom's Managed WiFi. For a small monthly fee, we'll handle many tasks for you. To learn more, visit [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net) or call 320-986-2013.**