

Connections

JANUARY 2025

Start the New Year With Confidence

Happy New Year from Runestone Telecom! This new year gives you a new chance to go after your goals, so move forward with gusto. As you navigate the road ahead, remember we're here to help—as your communications provider and your neighbor. We want you to live your best life.

Office Closure

We'll be closed on Wed., Jan. 1st for New Year's Day. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.

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

24/7 HelpDesk for Internet Outages and Technical Support:
320-986-6655

helpdesk@runestone.net

Visit Us: www.runestone.net

Find Us: [!\[\]\(b4eeff342f60cc7bcd67d869b4fedca2_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(7cbfaf281ed50ce10ba1259f16ecca5e_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(45e19980741702820171ea460fc10e37_img.jpg\)](#)

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!



New Year NEW Internet VALUES

We're offering faster speeds at lower prices starting January 1st, 2025!

Your New Year will be even happier with Runestone Telecom's revamped Internet packages. You can look forward to a better Internet experience while video chatting, streaming, gaming, or working from home.

A managed WiFi router, offering network protection and control, will be included for ALL customers with ALL of these new Internet packages.

\$75.95 - 100 Mbps

Best for light Internet use such as email, casual surfing, shopping, streaming a few devices, and distance learning.

\$89.95 - 300 Mbps

Best for streaming high definition on several devices, surveillance camera system use, and casual gaming.

\$119.95 - 1 Gig

Best for serious gaming, a fully connected smart home, and working from home.



WE HAVE UPGRADED! Our customers are now enjoying faster speeds! Did you miss out on the upgrade? Call our office at 320-986-2013. If you have speeds of 10-15 Mbps or slower, please call us for assistance.

Service availability and Internet speed will depend on location. Certain restrictions apply. Contact us for details.

Runestone Telecom Director Election

This year there will be a director elected for a five-year term on Runestone Telecom's Board of Directors from District 3 (Barrett, Cyrus, and Hoffman). 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 and click on "The Cooperative" for more information including director qualifications 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. Petitions may be submitted between January 17th, 2025, and March 18th, 2025 for any interested parties.

New Members

Alexandria

Ludovissie,
Bill & Judy.....320-391-9007

Barrett

Thronson, Paul & Judy...320-528-2277

Cyrus

Ettesvold, Jere.....320-795-2281

Elbow Lake

Schmiesing,
Christopher.....218-685-3030

Herman

Lakeside Seed &
Insurance.....320-677-8008



Apply Now for 2025 Scholarships

Have a high school senior in your family? Make them aware of these scholarship opportunities.

Minnesota Telecom Alliance (MTA)

The MTA Foundation will award scholarships to high school seniors graduating in 2025. Each scholarship will be a one-time amount of \$2,000 or \$3,000.

There are two categories:

- 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 five \$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.*

Foundation for Rural Service (FRS)

FRS has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships since its inception.

Visit www.runestone.net and refer to the scholarships banner ad for links to details and applications, which must be returned to Runestone Telecom Association by February 14th, 2025.

Our Next Annual Meeting Celebrates 75 Years

Save the date for July 16th, 2025, as Runestone Telecom will mark our 75th anniversary with our Annual Meeting featuring a community meal and prizes plus fun activities for the kids!

How Can Low-Income Consumers Get Help From Lifeline?

Communications services are vitally important to gain access to resources related to jobs, health care, education, and more. Lifeline is an FCC program that helps make these services more affordable for low-income subscribers.

Lifeline provides up to a \$9.25 monthly discount on service for eligible low-income subscribers and up to \$34.25 per month for eligible subscribers on Tribal lands. Subscribers may receive a Lifeline discount on either a wireline or a wireless phone service, but they may not receive a discount on both services at the same time. Lifeline also supports broadband Internet service and broadband-voice bundles. FCC rules prohibit more than one Lifeline service per household.

To participate in the Lifeline program, you must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or participate in certain federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or certain Tribal Programs. You can also qualify to participate in Lifeline if you're a survivor or your child or dependent participates in any of the programs listed above.

To see if you're eligible for Lifeline, review the detailed information available at lifelinesupport.org. The next step is to apply, and there are several ways to do that. You may apply directly through the Lifeline programs National Verifier online portal at lifelinesupport.org or by mailing a paper application form (available on the National Verifier online portal after entering your state). You may also apply for the program by working with a Lifeline service provider either in-person at a store location or online via the service provider's website, if they support that option — which Runestone Telecom does.

After you qualify for Lifeline, you need to sign up for phone and/or Internet service or ask Runestone Telecom to apply your Lifeline benefit to a service you're already getting.

Do you have questions about the Lifeline application process? Call the Lifeline Support Center at 1-800-234-9473 or email LifelineSupport@usac.org. You may also call Runestone Telecom at 320-986-2013.



Check Out This Photo Contest Winner



"I have been working on my family history for many years, starting with the times I needed to use snail mail or actual visits to people or places to find the information. The Internet has opened up the possibilities of finding the information so much easier! Since companies are constantly adding more data, it is amazing what can be found. Please keep my Internet as good as it is now and keep making the improvements! Thank you, Runestone!" — **Linda Westrom**

Thank you, Linda, for your kind words and for entering our photo contest!

Phone Directory Delivery



In February 2025, the new phone directories will arrive by mail to customers. Extras will be available at our office.



Try eBill and AutoPay

Instead of mailing a check, use eBill for more security, lower costs, and less time required. Choose AutoPay and we'll automatically deduct your bill amount on the 20th of the month from the account you designate.

Visit www.runestone.net to sign up. Call 320-986-2013 for help.

FUSC Rate Change

Effective January 1st, 2025, the Federal Universal Service Charge (FUSC) on your bill will increase from 35.8% to 36.3%.

See TV Guide

You can always find the most up to date show listings on our website at 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.



Field Notes on Our Fiber Builds

Project Updates

- Mother Nature decided we were done with fiber projects for 2024. We did get started in both Belgrade and Brooten toward the end of the 2024 season.
- We finished what we had intended for construction in Traverse County and in Herman. Cutovers (the transition from the old copper cable network to a new fiber-optic network) are taking place in Herman, Wheaton, and Hoffman. We have splicers working in Traverse County.
- Central Offices are built in both Brooten and Belgrade, but they are not ready to be powered yet. In 2025 we will begin and continue to install fiber-optic cable to Stearns County and Crow Lake Township.

Take a Peek at Installation



Curt Hyatt, Network Technician at Runestone Telecom and Tom Bolte, Install Technician at J Carlson Service install fiber optics at a residence in Hoffman, MN.

The ONT (optical network terminal) is the box that contains the cables for the fiber into the home or business. Think of it as the “heart” of the fiber for the home. It can be found in a basement, utility room, etc. In the event of a power interruption that affects your phone, cable TV or Internet service, this ONT may need to be reset. If the battery needs to be replaced, a technician will take care of this for you. Please call our office should you lose service and/or this ONT has continuous beeping.



As a reminder, if you are building or remodeling, be sure to have one of our technicians stop by for recommendations on cabling before insulation is installed and the walls are covered up. Wireless can be a workable option, but it is highly recommended to have cable run throughout the house to provide the best connection possible to your devices.



Curt Hyatt and Tom Bolte connect fiber-optic service to a new house in Hoffman.