



The Connection

January 2012

Runestone to Offer National Scholarship to Local Schools

As your local telecommunications service provider, it is our pleasure to offer this national scholarship program to the students in our local schools. Established in 1994, the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), in cooperation with the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA), seeks to sustain and enhance the quality of life throughout Rural America by advancing an understanding of rural telecommunications issues. In keeping with its mission, furthering the education of rural youth is one of the foundation's primary focuses. Our company is a member of NTCA and proud to support FRS in this worthy endeavor.

The FRS will award 30 scholarships of \$2,000 each to qualified students. Should a student from our service area be selected to receive one of these, we will contribute an additional \$500 to the scholarship. Applicants must be a graduating high school senior and receive any telecommunications service from Runestone Telecom, along with some other eligibility requirements found on the application. To download an application, go to

http://www.frs.org/images/stories/FRS_documents/FRS_ScholarshipBrochure2012_embedded.pdf

Applications must be returned to our office no later than February 23rd. Winners will be notified in May.

Want to run for RTA's Director position

The procedure to run for a director has changed this year. Anyone wishing to run for director position needs to fill out a petition with 10 member signatures on it. The petition form can be obtained at our office or at our website... http://home.runestone.net/rt/RTA_Bylaws.htm. The directorship for Hoffman & Barrett are up this year.

Completed petitions will be accepted between January 13th and March 13th. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 11, 2012.

Agreement Reached by FOX Networks

Runestone Telecom has come to terms with the FOX networks which include Fox Sports North, Fox 9 and WFTC. We have also come to terms with all the other major networks. Now for the bad news: the Fox contracts are for a one year period only so we will be doing this all over again next year with FOX as we were unable to come to an agreement on a long term contract. The second piece of bad news is cable rates will be going up. We expect rates for Broadcast Basic to go up about \$ 3.00 and Basic Rates to increase about \$ 6.00 and the Works package to increase about \$ 7.00. This rate increase will go into effect sometime this spring. When you add up what we pay to ESPN, Fox Sports, and the major networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX) these 6 channels make up about 50% of the total programming costs of the Basic Package.



Question of the month:

Why don't you just take off a few of the channels I don't watch to keep the Fox Networks?

Answer:

First of all the Fox Networks we are looking at dropping are the most expensive channels we pay. We would have to take off 20 to 30 other channels to make up for the cost of Fox Networks. Many channels only charge a nickel or a dime and, in some cases, some channels pay us to put them on the system.

Second, most subscribers only watch about 12 channels. However, the 12 channels you watch are probably different than the 12 channels your neighbor or I watch. Thus, we need to have a good cross section of channels so most everyone is satisfied.

Third, many channels are owned by the same multi-million dollar corporation. Fox Networks owns Fox Sports, Fox 9, WFTC, Fox News, National Geographic and others. Many of these corporations require us to carry all of their networks or carry none. Also, they do not allow us to put the more expensive channels on a separate tier or package.



New Years Day Holiday Closing

Our office will be closed on Monday, January 2nd. Troubles will be handled by our on-call technicians.

Meet Your Runestone Employee

Name:

Clay Drews

Job Title and Description:

Internet Manager

Education:

Associate's Degree—Computer Technology— NDSCS
Bachelor's Degree— Computer Science, Electronic Engineering
Technology-SSU

Hometown:

Fergus Falls

Where do you reside:

Latitude 45.991406
Longitude -95.966523

Family:

Kim, Chris-18, JJ-16

Years of Employment:

15

Hobbies:

Vintage audio equipment, keeping up with the kids

Favorite part of your job:

The wide variety of projects that come across my desk and the great people I get to work with!



Santa bring you a new flat screen TV or a new computer?



Let us finish the present for you with our high speed internet. We offer high speed internet in 8 different speeds so depending on what you use it for, there is a speed for you. Since the beginning of internet, people are learning more things they can learn or use the internet for.

The trend now is to watch movies from Netflix or Blockbuster. Or watch the weekly show from either the website of the show such as ABC's "The View", "Extreme Makeover" or many more. You can watch from either your computer or connect with a device such as Roku, Vudu, Wii or many others. This brings the information from your computer to your TV. We have the speeds to let you enjoy the internet the way you like.

For more information, call our office and ask about what our high speed internet can do for you.



New Billing System for the New Year

The new year will bring a new billing system for us. What does that mean for you? Your bill you receive starting in February will look different. There will be an explanation of how to read it along with the bill. Along with a different looking bill, we are looking forward to adding services to you such as credit card payments, which will happen sometime this year, and a better e-bill service for you to use.

Our Capital Credit allocation will change as we used to take into consideration not only the services you are billed for, such as your phone service, but all the minutes used on long distance calls. Now, we will only use services billed to you.

Please call our office if you have any other questions about it.



Minnesota's 511 Service....

Provides information regarding weather related road conditions, construction and congestion, via the web or by phone...24 hours a day...7 days a week.

By phone, you simply dial 511 and when asked, say the name of the city you would like information for. If you aren't sure, say Menu. Listen carefully and follow the prompts as it gives you the options to choose from.

On the internet, go to: www.511mn.org

You will find information on traffic incidents, road conditions, current & month-by-month construction, traffic cameras from the Twin Cities, public transit info and weather reports.

The 511 service is provided free of charge to the public when using a land line phone. Cell phone users will pay for normal airtime and roaming charges according to their wireless service contracts.



**Welcome,
New Customers!**

Barrett...

Bjorgan, Mae 528-2604
 Dalum, Charlotte Mrs 528-2560
 Haack, Kevin 528-2622
 Hurlbut, Beverly 528-2545
 Smith, Justin & Billie 528-6280

Donnelly...

Prindle, Joan 246-3536

Elbow Lake...

Flood, J 685-4023
 Hansen, Jude & Tessa 685-4160
 Holmes, Danita 685-4145
 Jennen, Nathan T 685-6442

ManeFrame Salon & Boutique 685-6212
 Cell 770-2921

Hoffman...

DeNoble, Sarah 986-2991
 Distad, Todd & Nicki 986-2225
 Larson, Donald S 986-2281

Kensington...

Thompson, P E 965-2243

Lowry...

Pooch, Austin & Kate 283-5050

Federal Universal Service Charge to go up January 1...

There will be a change in the charge for the Federal Universal Service Charge as follows:

	<u>Before January 1st</u>	<u>January 1st</u>
Single Line access	99¢	\$1.16
Multi Line Access	\$1.41	\$1.65

The Federal Universal Service Charge (FUSC) Surcharge factor recovers the costs associated with Runestone Telecom Association contributions to the federal universal service fund program.

Channel 206 Versus now NBC Sports...

For our cable TV customers, Channel 206 changed from Versus to NBC Sports on January 1st.



Winter Tips to Protect Your Phone Service...

With the winter season here, please don't cover protector boxes (on the side of your house or buildings) with plastic or hay bales. We may need to access those if you would have service problems. Don't pile snow next to the house near your protector as the weight of the snow may pull on the wires to your protector and interrupt your service. When moving snow from your driveway or yard, please be careful not to hit our pedestals (green boxes) or to pile snow around them. If you should experience an outage, we may need to have access to them. And for those of you who snowmobile, please be careful not to hit the pedestals near the edges of the ditches.

*Happy New Year....from all of us at
Runestone Telecom Association*

Time & Temperature is a phone call away!

Here is a list of numbers you can call to get the current time & temperature 24 hours a day:

Barrett	528-6611	Kensington	965-6611
Cyrus	795-6611	Lowry	283-6611
Donnelly	246-6611	Norcross	284-6611
Elbow Lake	685-6611	Tintah	369-6611
Hoffman	986-6611	Wendell	458-6611

(The temperature is from Hoffman.)



Contact Us....Office Information

Runestone Telecom Assn
 100 Runestone Dr
 PO Box 336
 Hoffman MN 56339-0336

Phone: 320-986-2013
 Fax: 320-986-2050
 Internet Help Desk: 320-986-6655

Office Hours
 Monday—Friday
 8am to 4:30pm

Thank you for being our customer! We appreciate your patronage & support!