

THE CONNECTION

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2018

Runestone
Telecom Association

In This Issue

College Scholarship Opportunities 2

Manager's Update 2

Channels Contract Negotiation 3

Holiday Customer Appreciation Open House 3

New Members 3

Jingle Bells Telethon 4

Time & Temp 4

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Runestone Telecom Association is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

GADGET GIFTS EVERYONE LOVES

Stuff their stockings with technology:

- Roku boxes to stream Netflix
- Amazon Echo or Echo Dots
- Kindle Fire
- Smart Watches or Fitbits
- Gift cards to online video streaming

Make sure your Internet is fast enough to enjoy the "New Toys". Upgrade for just a few dollars per month.

Or call us for ideas!



College Scholarship Opportunities

We are proud to offer these scholarship opportunities through the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), in cooperation with NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. They seek to enhance the quality of life in America by advancing an understanding of rural issues and strongly support the continuing education of rural youth. Here are the scholarships available:

- **Four \$5,000 Staurulakis Family Scholarships**
Preference to students majoring in math, science, engineering or medicine
- **Two \$1,500 TMS Scholarships**
- **One \$7,000 Everett Kneese Scholarship**
- **Three \$500 Roger Alan Cox Memorial Scholarships**
- **\$2,000 scholarship from FRS, with a \$500 match from Runestone Telecom**
Scholarships will be awarded per geographic region of the NTCA membership and one sponsored NTCA Associate member. The awards are distributed proportionate to the number of applications received per region.

Each applicant must:

- Be a graduating high school senior
- Be a US citizen
- Be accepted by an accredited two or four year college, university or vocational-technical school
- Have at least a C grade point average (GPA)
- Express interest to return to a rural community following graduation
- A parent of the applicant must have at least one service from us to be considered for these awards

The application must be postmarked to FRS no later than March 1, 2018. A signature from our general manager, board of director or designated employee of Runestone Telecom is required.

You can find the application on our website: www.runestone.net or at the FRS website: www.frs.org/images/FRS_Schship_App_2018.pdf

MANAGER'S UPDATE From Kent Hedstrom



Runestone Telecom had another very busy year. As we close out 2017, we project that 2018 will be another year of great productivity. We continue our goal of bringing Fiber to every location in the Cooperative to provide exceptional phone, Internet, and television service to all of our customers.

Most of this year's construction took place in the Lowry exchange, where we installed a fiber-optic backbone from the east side of Freeborn Lake north of Farwell east to Lake Reno. Twenty miles of mainline cable were installed in the Lowry exchange and service lines to 100 customers.

Significant progress was made in our Holmes City 2 Grant Project. Installation of 15 miles of mainline cable and service lines to 110 new customers was completed. The Project was planned as a two-year project but our dedicated employees and contractors have completed 85% of the mainline and 45% of the services in the first year. Our rural Lowry exchange and the Holmes City Grant 2 area should be complete in 2018. This means the entire rural area of your cooperative will be connected via fiber.

We anticipate starting our Fiber to the Home build in the City of Elbow Lake next year, and will then focus on the communities of Barrett, Hoffman, Kensington, Cyrus and Donnelly. Our goal is to have our Fiber build complete in less than six years.

We appreciate so many Cable TV subscribers who took the time to respond to our survey. We are negotiating with content providers and facing rate increases for current content. There will be difficult decisions to make regarding what programming stays and what gets removed. Survey results will help guide our decisions regarding our channel lineup. We strive to provide our customers quality programming at an affordable price. Please note that we can assist you in finding online viewing options that may better fit some of our subscribers.

It is a pleasure serving our cooperative members and customers throughout the region. We enjoy hearing from you when you have questions or concerns. We hope you have a wonderful holiday season and look forward to serving you in 2018.

CHANNEL CONTRACT NEGOTIATION IN PROGRESS

It's the time of year at Runestone Telecom when we negotiate rates for some television networks carried on our TV system. As we expected, some stations are asking us for large rate increases. The prices continue to increase partly due to declining viewership as more people are now watching television through the internet. When this happens, the stations lose ad revenue and to cover losses, increase the rates to providers like us.

Our goal is to advocate on your behalf. We strive to keep the cost of

your cable television low yet provide a variety of channels to you. We are currently in negotiations for these channels: WUCW, KMSP, WFTC, WCCO, KVLV, KARE, FSN, NAT GEO, FXM, Charge!, Comet, TBD, Buzzr and Movies!



If we do not reach an agreement with the owners of these channels, they will go off the air December 31st, 2017.

Right now, simply keep enjoying your programming. There is nothing you need to do because we're hard at work behind the scenes. If anything changes, we'll send updates. Thank you for choosing Runestone TV!

Welcome New Customers!

BARRETT

Chasteen, Margaret 528-4185

CYRUS

Mendoza, Juan & Janel 795-2844
Pashan, David 795-2040

ELBOW LAKE

Berner, Carl & Helen 685-2133
Coleman, Ted 685-2034
DeLong, Matt 685-2550
Dominguez, Adriana 685-2415
Hough, Lorne 685-2120
John, David P 685-5228
John, Jessie 685-2073
Koplin, Dallas & Katie 685-2122
Leavitt, Travis 685-3280
Myron, JT 685-2058
Smith, Andrew 685-2024
Starnes, Clinton & Chelsea 685-2076
Vail, Tom & Vickie 685-4110
Welcome, Dallas & Robin 685-2300

HOFFMAN

Greeley, Sam & Marsha 986-2261
Johnson, Travis & Emily 986-2308
Kloose, Phillip & Kris 986-3202
Massage by Lynn 986-2304
Or 700 Cedar St #233,
Alexandria - cell 320-766-5511
McMoran, Cathy 986-2570
Starner, David 986-2392
Woodke, Darin & Alexis 986-2246

KENSINGTON

Johnson, Curt & Debbey 965-5432
Johnson Jet-Line Inc 965-2374
Maheux, Emmy L 965-2327
Morris, Jesse 965-3130

LOWRY

Affeldt, Donald 283-2069
Hunke, Brittani & Emanuel 283-2931
Klimek, Derek 283-2033
Pendergraft, Elizabeth 283-2066

Office Holiday Closings

Our office will be closed on the following dates:

**Monday, December 25th
& Monday, January 1st**

Merry Christmas



Holiday Customer Appreciation Open House

**Friday, December 15th
9 am to 3 pm**

Runestone Telecom Office Hoffman

Join us for hot apple cider, coffee and cookies.

Jingle Bells Telethon

The 69th Annual Jingle Bells Telethon will be aired on Runestone Cable TV Channel 6 on December 9th starting at 5pm. Or, you can watch the event live on their website at

www.jinglebellsalexandria.org



The event is held at the Lake Geneva Christian Center in Alexandria.

BRRR! Temp a Call Away

It tells you the time of day and temperature from Hoffman. Find your local number here:

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



Survey Thanks!

Thank you to all who completed our Cable TV survey in November.

We appreciate the feedback and are considering your opinions.

NEW
YEAR
NEW
SPEED
NEW
FUN



If your household increased its internet usage in 2017 — due to adding devices and streaming more often — then we suggest you start 2018 with a higher speed. It'll put you on the fast track to having extra fun while watching movies, playing online games, etc.

Runestone Telecom offers affordable internet plans with download speeds from 5 Mbps to 1000 Mbps.

CALL 320-986-2013 TO START THE YEAR OFF RIGHT! WITH FASTER INTERNET.

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Service availability and internet speed will depend on location. Contact us for complete details.

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*From our family at Runestone Telecom to yours,
Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years!*