

## 2003 Calendar

### January

- Version 1.2.5 Testing  
1/27 - mid-March
- Partner/Primary Contact  
Meeting 1/29-30 Denver,  
CO

### February

- Version 1.2.5 Testing  
continues

### March

- Version 1.2.5 Testing  
continues
- IRMWT Meeting 3/3-7  
Albuquerque, NM
- National Logistics  
Meeting 3/10-14  
Reno, NV

## National ROSS Forum Held in Lakewood Colorado

Twenty ROSS Partners and Primary Contacts, sent by their respective home areas, recently met for two days in Lakewood, Colorado to lay the groundwork for successful ROSS Dispatch implementation in early 2003. The working meeting was held so that representatives from each Geographic Area and the National Interagency Coordination Center could view changes in the next ROSS release and share ideas and lessons learned from each other's efforts.

NICC and many of the Geographic Areas began holding ROSS practice sessions in January to build dispatcher proficiency and reveal any issues that need to be addressed prior to implementation. Each area is approaching their practice sessions from a different perspective, for example; the Northern Rockies Area sets a single clear objective each week. Most areas have found practice sessions to be very valuable.

The group spent a great deal of time reviewing the features of upcoming ROSS versions. One ROSS Partner observed that many of the suggestions made by dispatchers in her geographic area are being incorporated in the next release of ROSS (version 1.2.5). Area practice sessions and dispatch training sessions have resulted in several suggestions for improving the ROSS application. Some of these suggestions have already been incorporated in the application and others will be evaluated by following the change management process.



Project Manager Jon Skeels discusses upcoming ROSS releases with the National ROSS Partners

## National ROSS Forum....

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A draft “Readiness Review Checklist” was discussed and fine-tuned. This checklist will be used at NICC and in each area to ensure all dispatch offices are ready to begin using ROSS for dispatching. The group also reviewed spreadsheets that would help them ensure that data entered by offices in their areas is correct. The spreadsheets are another tool they will use to prepare for implementation.

One ROSS Partner noted the appropriate shift of ROSS ownership from the ROSS Team to the business community. She stated that it’s up to the dispatch community to begin working on standards, such as determining which office level should enter aircraft contracts, to ensure consistency and lack of redundant efforts. Jon Skeels, Project Manager, complimented the ROSS Partners and Primary Contacts on the good work they have done to help prepare for ROSS implementation, and encouraged them to be proactive in their efforts.



## ROSS Questions of the Month

*Security seems to be a big deal these days. How will my use of ROSS be affected?*

Security of our data, as well as access control to our equipment is very important, and requirements for users will become more stringent. There are several things that will be implemented soon that will affect ROSS and DMS users. Currently, dispatch offices have one log-on for their Dispatch Messaging System (DMS). In the future, the DMS mail server will be changed to require unique usernames and passwords that will access the same inbox. In addition, passwords will need to be

changed on a scheduled basis.

ROSS users will be asked to sign a “Rules of Behavior” document. This document will describe ROSS security policy on topics such as password configuration, user access to the system, security violations, etc., and will be kept on file at the local dispatch office.

Finally, we need to ensure that assigned privileges and roles are appropriate to the user they are assigned to. Geographic Areas should remove data administration roles from individual’s accounts, and establish and use unique accounts specifically for data management.

### *What is web status and who can use it?*

Web status was built for non-ROSS users to update their status in ROSS. These non-ROSS users fall into three groups – overhead resources who status themselves, supervisors who status their employees and vendors who status their resources. Resources must be entered into ROSS before web status access can be set up.

Once the dispatch office establishes a username and password for the resource wanting to use web status, the web interface allows updates to area of availability, status, location, unavailability dates and remarks.

At this time only one supervisory level can be used for web status. This will be corrected in a future version.

### Answers to crossword puzzle on page 4

#### Across

3. UTF
4. GACC
6. Subordinates
7. Roster
8. Complex

#### Down

1. External Resource
2. Durability Flag
5. Reserved
8. Claim

## Reports Process Improves

This spring reports will be generated from data outside the actual ROSS application. A tool called the “Oracle Data Warehouse Builder” is being used to create a data warehouse that will contain all of the information entered into ROSS. A data warehouse is a copy of transaction data structured for querying and reporting. Currently, reports are run directly on the ROSS database. With the implementation of the data warehouse, data from ROSS will update the warehouse periodically providing the ability for near real time reports, while separating the workload from the application server. In addition, the warehouse will provide a repository of data from a longer span of time than can efficiently be held directly in ROSS and will allow the generation of historic reports.

Approximately 50 standard reports will be available from the warehouse sorted by themes. Additionally, users will have the ability to perform ad hoc queries using BRIO, the supported report generation tool, or another tool, which may be accessible through the world wide web. Having a data warehouse also provides the security of having a back up of ROSS data that is near real time.

## Helpdesk Corner by David Kee



Hello again from the entire ROSS/DMS Helpdesk. In January the helpdesk answered an all time high 275 calls surpassing the previous high of 241 in November 2002. As you can see we had quite a busy month!

The helpdesk has become involved in the GACC practice sessions, and is receiving a number of calls from practice participants. Please continue to use the helpdesk during practice sessions, it not only provides practice for you, but also provides great “real world” experiences for the helpdesk staff.

Below are some of the most frequent questions and answers from recent practice sessions:

**Question:** I know I have a resource available to fill the request I just made, but when I go to pending request the resource is not there. What’s up?

**Answer:** The new request most likely had a feature attached to the request that the resource you know is available does not have. Follow these steps to check:

- Go to pending request and with the request highlighted click the search (magnifying glass) at the bottom of the screen.
- On the search resources screen, at the bottom check “Do Not Match Features” and click ok.
- This will re-query the system and the resource that you know is available will probably now show up.

If the resource still does not show:

- On the resource status screen, highlight the resource in question and select the “detail” icon. This will show the availability period and activation/deactivation dates of the resource you think should be available.

**Question:** I can’t see my friend’s incidents on the pending request screen. I have checked my personal settings and the pending request filters are set correctly, what could be the problem?

**Answer:** There are a couple of possible reasons for this:

- Your neighbor’s incidents will not display on the pending request screen until there is a new request for the incident sent to you.
- The pending request screen may need to be refreshed or refiltered.

Another great source of help can be the searchable knowledge base called Knowlix®, accessible through the Helpdesk home page at <http://ross.nwcg.gov>. Click on the “UTA ROSS Helpdesk” logo, and then select the link to

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# Agencies Approve ROSS

The Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have recently issued memos directing the use of ROSS once readiness certification reviews have been completed. The agencies asked managers to support implementation by allowing employees to attend training sessions, and to make trainers and coaches available for the sessions. These agency memos follow an interagency letter issued to the wildland fire community in October from the Chair of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) supporting ROSS implementation. Memos of support from other agencies are expected to be issued soon.

ROSS Business Lead Neal Hitchcock said, “This is another milestone in the ROSS project, and it is important that we continue to conscientiously prepare for this new technology.”

To view the entire text of the BLM, BIA, Forest Service and NWCG memos, access the ROSS website at <http://ross.nwcg.gov>

## Helpdesk Corner

by David Kee

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Knowlix®. This knowledge base continues to be updated on a regular basis with valuable solutions and general information about both ROSS and DMS.

**Did You Know???** If you searched the ROSS knowledge base in Knowlix® for the phrase “resource not showing”, you would have found the answer to first frequently asked question in the section above. Give Knowlix® a try. It can be a great tool.

That’s all for this edition of the Helpdesk Corner. Keep those calls and emails coming to 866-224-7677, or to [helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov](mailto:helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov). Remember, you can also use HEAT Self Service from the helpdesk web page.

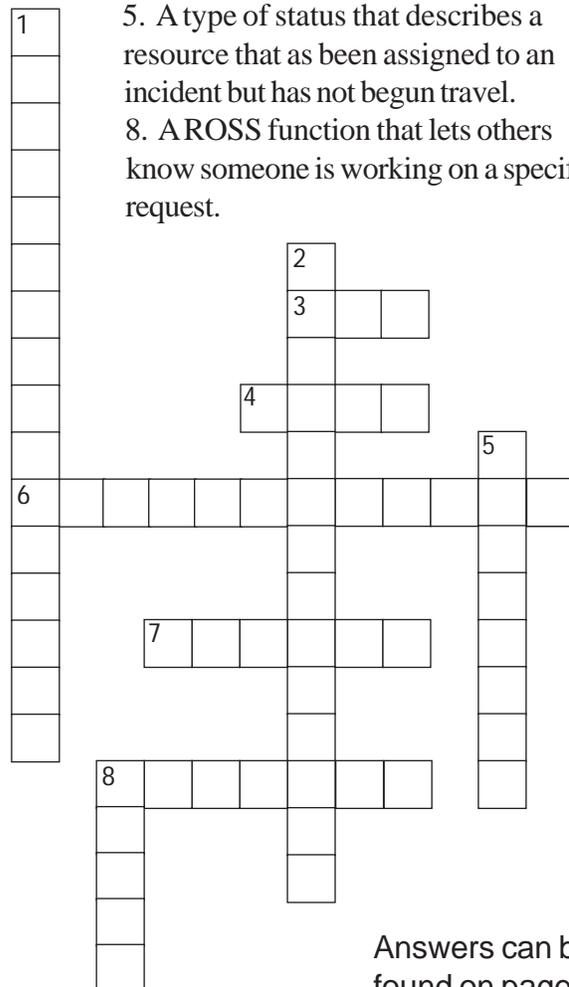
# ROSS SPEAK

### Across

- 3. Unable to Fill (abbrev.)
- 4. Geographic Area Coordination Center (abbrev.)
- 6. Original incidents assigned to #8 across are referred to as this.
- 7. A list of positions, as defined by an NWCG configuration, and the resources that fill each position in the configuration.
- 8. Two or more existing incidents are assigned under a new artificial incident. The new incident is called this.

### Down

- 1. A resource found in the ROSS inventory but from a non-ROSS dispatch unit. (2 words)
- 2. An indicator of whether the item is a permanent fixture or created on a temporary basis. (2 words)
- 5. A type of status that describes a resource that as been assigned to an incident but has not begun travel.
- 8. A ROSS function that lets others know someone is working on a specific request.



Answers can be found on page 2