



## 2003 Calendar

### September

- NASF Meeting 9/14-18  
Portland, OR

### October

- ROSS Core Team Meeting 10/20-23  
Lakewood, CO
- IRMWT Meeting 10/21-23  
Boise, ID
- Release of ROSS Version 1.2.6

## Improvements Made to Software and Hardware

As ROSS was used this summer several issues were identified through system monitoring and user feedback. System engineers tell us that when a system of the magnitude of ROSS is deployed, unanticipated system behavior should be expected. As the system is tuned (see “Name that Tune” article below) system issues will occur less and less frequently.

A number of changes were made this summer to improve the performance of the ROSS application including: settings with the ORACLE database; increasing the memory on each of the servers; increasing the number of Business Logic Servers (VLS); increasing user limits for the gatekeeper; additional server capacity; several application releases to correct or improve software issues; and a variety of tips to help users utilize the system in ways that help improve system performance. While there are still a number of things that will be done over the next few years to improve the application, users noticed the changes that had been made throughout the summer.

Decisions are currently being made on the priority work for the application development team for the winter. The number of suggestions, change requests and previously identified modifications is so large that only a percentage of them can be addressed at one time. The ROSS Team and Dispatch Coordinators are concentrating on identifying those items where we will get “the biggest bang for the buck”. Stay tuned for information regarding what types of changes to expect in future articles. In the meantime, version 1.2.6 will be released this fall – watch the website for information on this release.

## Name That Tune

Lately, we have used the term “system tuning” a lot. Many have asked what the term means. In its simplest form, tuning is the process of optimizing system performance. Enterprise systems such as ROSS have many components that require tuning including: database server, application server, web server, system hardware configuration, Network (internal and external to

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## Question of the Month

### *Why do we do so many updates in ROSS?*

When the ROSS Project was chartered and the Business Requirements completed, dispatchers requested that when possible, updates to the application be made available as soon as possible to provide any new or updated functionality to the field. When planning the rollout of complex applications, decisions must be made as to the timing of release for specific updates and new functionality. A proposed revision schedule is prepared by the contractor and approved by the

ROSS Team based on urgency of the needed revisions or additions, availability of products (such as new versions of software used by ROSS, or hardware upgrades), and capacity of the contactor and government team. As items in the schedule are completed and tested, updates to the application are released to users.

As the application is used, issues arise that may or may not have been known prior to the release. Those that are considered critical rise in priority and a minor release is completed to correct the critical items as well as incorporate items that were scheduled for release.

Although updates can be frustrating for users, it is impossible to improve the performance of the application without them.

## ROSS Support Teams Lend a Hand

ROSS Team members and employees skilled in ROSS from across the country have been supporting dispatch centers and expanded dispatch offices throughout the country this summer. As of the first week in September, 40 people have logged over 990 person days providing support, troubleshooting and helping with on-the-job training.

The Support Teams have had a benefit not only to the areas receiving the support, but also for the home units of the folks who are bringing back a wealth of information that can be applied locally. New “experts” have also developed over the summer, making the pool of skilled employees even larger for the future.

### THE SUGGESTION BOX

Have a good idea? Wish something in ROSS was configured just a bit differently? Send your ideas to the ROSS Suggestion Box. This inbox will be monitored, and suggestions reviewed by the ROSS Team approximately every 30 days. The ROSS Project Manager and Business Lead will review those that are not already covered under an existing change request for applicability to the project. If applicable, the suggestion will then be submitted to the ROSS Change Management Process.

Please do not use this inbox for critical issues or problems since it is not monitored daily. For problems or requests for help, continue to contact the helpdesk directly.

As of September 1, 2003, 185 messages had been received in the inbox, many of them having several suggestions included.

Send your ideas to the ROSS Suggestion Box at [ross\\_suggestion@dms.nwcg.gov](mailto:ross_suggestion@dms.nwcg.gov).

## Helpdesk Corner by David Kee



With the release of ROSS version 1.2.5 and the beginning of fire season, the helpdesk has seen a sharp rise in call volume from April through July.

### Monthly call volume increase

• April	954	181%
• May	1553	62%
• June	2222	70%
• July	3333	150%

We experienced a decrease in call volume during August. We appreciate your patience and apologize for any inconvenience or extended time in

the call queue you may have experienced. Staffing has been added during peak calling periods to assist with the increased call volume. Please be advised that ROSS production help calls will take precedence over ROSS practice calls. The helpdesk staff is ready and waiting to answer your questions and provide you with the support you need to be successful.

The helpdesk continues to populate the Knowlix® knowledge base, which is scheduled for a large update by the end of September. To view it, from the ROSS homepage, click on the User Support Tab, then click on the “UTA ROSS Helpdesk” logo, from here select the link to the Knowlix® knowledge base.

We are available to help you in any way with both ROSS and DMS. Please call us at 866-224-7677, email at [helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov](mailto:helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov), or use the HEAT Self Service tab from the helpdesk web page.

## *H*elpdesk Tips

**Q.** *How do I find my resources that I have sent to another incident or my requests that have been sent to another unit?*

**A.** Go to the request status screen and select the appropriate incident (Local or Non Local). Choose the appropriate catalog, and then select one of the following choices:

- Pending With – Your requests for resources that have been sent somewhere else and have not yet been filled or request(s) that passed through your office and you placed with someone else and have not yet been filled.
- Filled by – Resources you filled for someone else (choose your unit id) or information about your request(s) that have been filled by others.
- Completed – Requests that have been completed. (i.e., closed, cancelled, etc.)

Each of the categories above have other filter options, and by choosing one of these for the catalog selected and then clicking filter you will see

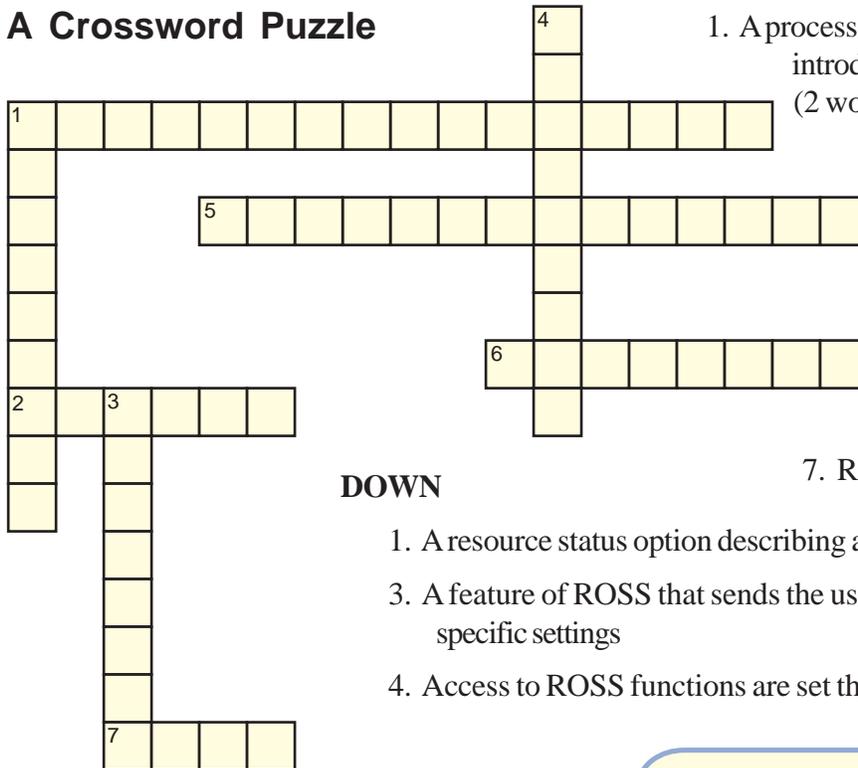
all the requests for that catalog and the option you selected.

**Q.** *Why don't I have a fill option on my crew or overhead request on Pending Request?*

**A.** What has probably happened is that the request is pending because the assignment roster has not been completed, and the order has not been set as filled. The quickest way to check is to look in the “G” column of the pending request screen, if you see “WC\*” that means that the request was made “With Configuration (WC)” and the “\*” means that an assignment roster has been started for the request but not completed. Highlight the request on pending request, then click upper grid Action, then click “Continue Assignment Roster”. This will bring you to the assignment roster screen where the roster can be completed. Once the assignment roster is completed click the radio button beside “Commit Resources and Create Outstanding Requests”, then click the check box beside “Set” (request number) as filled, then click OK. This will fill the request using the roster and generate all the subordinate requests based on the roster configuration.

# ROSS Speak

## A Crossword Puzzle



### ACROSS

1. A process through which changes are introduced, approved and implemented (2 words)
2. The process of optimizing system performance
5. A resource request that is created as the result of another request (2 words)
6. Special attributes that a particular resource has
7. Resource Order Line Item (abbrv.)

### DOWN

1. A resource status option describing a resource assigned to an incident
3. A feature of ROSS that sends the user a message based on their specific settings
4. Access to ROSS functions are set through these (2 words)

Answers can be found below

## Name That Tune

*continued from page 1*

the system), and application code. Just as you need to have the engine in your car tuned occasionally for maximum performance (and the newer the car, the more complicated the process!), all components of an application must be constantly monitored and frequently adjusted.

Tuning is a process that takes time. When tuning a system, it is critical that measurements be taken over time and that they are taken when usage is at the average highs and lows. With ROSS, that means measurements get taken when there are 400-600 (average high) and 100-200 (average low) users. These measurements are then used to determine what aspects of the system should be tuned/optimized to make it perform better.

There are often tradeoffs that occur depending on the changes being made. For example, a change made to increase the number of users that

simultaneously access the system may affect the systems ability to store vast numbers of transactions simultaneously, or a change to increase processing speed may affect that amount of memory that needs to be available. There are thousands of configuration changes that can be made. Often, changes that seem obvious will have a detrimental affect on performance. Tuning is an on-going process with a central goal of optimizing performance.

A white paper describing the tuning process in greater detail is available on the ROSS website [http://ross.nwcg.gov/documents\\_library](http://ross.nwcg.gov/documents_library) in the “white papers” section.

**Answers to ROSS Speak from page 4**

**Across**

1 Change Management      6 Features      7 ROLI      4 User Roles

2 Tuning      3 Notifier

5 Support Request

**Down**

1 Committed