ROSS NEWSLETTER

We're on the web at
http://ross.nwcg.gov/

VOLUME 15 November/December 2002

2003 Calendar

January

- Version 1.2.5 Testing 1/27 - 2/7
- Partner/Primary Contact Meeting 1/29-30 Denver, CO

February

- Version 1.2.5 Release

March

- Core Team Meeting 3/18-20 Southwest Area

Practice Makes Perfect!

Every Wednesday planes are flying, crews are mobilizing and equipment is rolling in the Southwest. The Southwest Area Coordination Center has been initiating scenarios weekly within its geographic area to get familiar with using ROSS. "It has been great doing these exercises; since we'll most likely be the first to really use ROSS live, we wanted to be sure we were ready" said Cheryl Dickson, Primary Contact for the Southwest. Cheryl is collecting issues and problems that dispatchers have encountered. "The input we have received from the Southwest and other Geographic areas is invaluable," said Jon Skeels, ROSS Project Manager; "Many of the items that have surfaced are known issues that are being corrected in future releases, others are things we'll be taking a closer look at."

Many other Geographic areas are planning to start area-wide practice sessions early in the new year. The Rocky Mountain Area will have a week-long practice session the last week in March with each Dispatch Center filling orders and hosting multiple incidents. The Eastern and Western Great Basins will start weekly practice sessions in February. The Northwest began practicing in December and will continue into 2003. Both the Southern Area and the Northern Rockies will begin multiple user practice sessions in January. NICC is ready and willing to participate in any practice sessions; just give them a call!

Practice reminder: The data on the practice server is replaced with a copy of the production data on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month; plan accordingly since your practice incidents will "disappear" when the data is replaced.

See what's new in this edition.....

ROSS Questions of the Month (on page 2)
ROSS Speak - a crossword puzzle (on page 4)

ROSS Questions of the Month

The ROSS Team receives numerous questions regarding every aspect of the ROSS program and implementation. A new feature in the newsletter will be the "Questions of the Month" where we will address some of the more common questions we receive.

How often will SACS data be imported into ROSS?

The SACS Advisory Group has agreed to provide the SACS data once a month. The goal is to begin this by February 2003. The latest update was done in October 2002.

When using the ROSS application how can you tell if an incident is open or closed?

On the Incident screen, if the "Close Incident" button is available, the incident is still open. If the button appears as "Open Incident" (an opened folder), the incident has been closed. In Version 1.2.6 you will be able to remove incidents from your Incident List and Most Recent Incidents list. As planning progresses on this, we will advise folks.

I submitted a suggestion and question to the ROSS team and have not received a response. Will I get an answer?

The ROSS Team has hundreds of questions and suggestions that we'd like to try to address, but a personal response is not always possible. The team is working on listing frequently asked questions/ suggestions and providing them to instructors, Partners, and posting them on the website so the same ones don't have to be written up and submitted over and over. In addition, we'll continue this column to address some of the common questions. You can continue to submit suggestions/comments/questions to the ROSS Helpdesk (helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov).

ROSS Dispatch Implementation Gearing Up

Many Geographic Areas are planning to implement ROSS Resource Ordering this spring. At the December Coordinators meeting in San Antonio each geographic area presented the following implementation schedules:

GACC	Status	Resource Ordering
NICC	2002	when 1st GACC starts
Alaska	June 2003	TBD
Northwest	April 2003	April 2003
Northern Rockies	2002	when Version 1.2.5 is released
Eastern Great Basin	2002	April 2003
Western Great Basin	2002	late April 2003
Southwest	April 2003	April 2003
Rocky Mountain	2002	April 2003
Eastern Area	January 2003	September 2003
Southern Area	February 2003	April 2003
North Ops	May 2004	May 2004
South Ops	June 2003	May 2004

Several GACCs are preparing for implementation, encouraging dispatchers to practice using ROSS on their own, and by conducting practice sessions between multiple dispatch centers (see related article on page 1).

Helpdesk Corner
by David Kee

Wow!!! Time sure does fly when you're having fun. The ROSS/DMS Helpdesk marked its one year anniversary on December 17th. Let's look back at some of the milestones during the past year:

⇒ First Day call count – 4 (December 17, 2001)

⇒ First Month call count – 19 (December 2001)

⇒ Daily call count record – 23 (June 26, 2002)

⇒ Monthly call count record – 241 (November 2002)

⇒ First month over 100 calls – 132 (March 2002)

⇒ First month over 150 calls – 182 (June 2002)

⇒ First month over 200 calls – 241 (November 2002)

⇒ Total calls – Over 1,730

The entire ROSS/DMS Helpdesk has had a great year, we have learned an enormous amount, met a lot of great people, and really enjoyed the opportunity to help everyone with their questions.

The helpdesk continues to populate the Knowlix® knowledge base, which now has over 125 total entries and is updated on a regular basis. To view the knowledge base go to the ROSS homepage (http://ross.nwcg.gov), click on the User Support Tab, then click on the "UTA ROSS Helpdesk" logo, from here select the link to the Knowlix® knowledge base.

While on the helpdesk web page, check out HEAT Self Service (HSS), which is another way to contact the ROSS/DMS Helpdesk. You can login to HSS and create a trouble or call ticket for yourself, the ticket will automatically be generated and notify the helpdesk that someone is requesting assistance. Some other neat things about HSS are:

⇒ a list of all call tickets under your HEAT profile.

⇒ the ability to send the helpdesk updates on open tickets.

HEAT Self Service is just another way for you to get the support you need on the ROSS and DMS programs. To use HSS you will need a user name and password; just call the helpdesk and any of the representatives will be glad to set you up for immediate access.

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Readiness Reviews

Are you ready?! The ROSS Team is putting together a checklist to help Geographic Areas and Dispatch Offices with implementation readiness reviews. Reviews are recommended to insure Dispatch Offices are prepared to begin using ROSS for Resource Ordering. Some of the review items include: an examination of data to ensure it is cleaned up and accurate; validation that training and practice has occurred and was effective; assurance that security and disaster recovery plans are in place; and review of expanded dispatch plans. Lockheed Martin is developing spreadsheets to assist Dispatch Offices with their reviews. The checklist will be finalized at the primary contact/partner meeting in January.

In Remembrance

Lockheed Martin employee and ROSS software engineer, Arman Ohanyan, tragically died in an automobile accident in Colorado in December. Arman was noted on the ROSS team for his positive attitude and great sense of humor. Whenever Jon Skeels asked him about his software work, Arman would tell him the status and then he would say with a big smile, "... and would you like it gift wrapped?" Our thoughts go out to Arman's co-workers and family. He will be missed.

Helpdesk Corner

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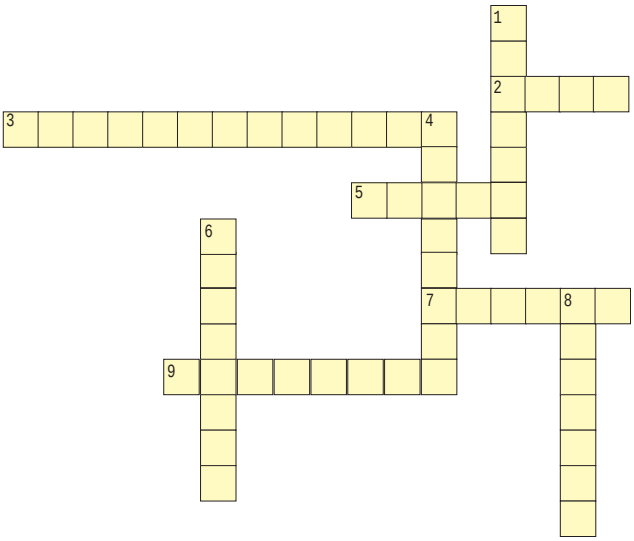
That's all for this time, as always we are available to help you in any way with both ROSS and DMS. Please call us at 866-224-7677, email at helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov, or use the HEAT Self Service tab from the helpdesk web page. Thanks again for a great year, we look forward to another extremely successful year in 2003.

ROSS Speak

We all know that every type of work has its own set of terminology. Dispatching is no different! With the implementation of ROSS, new terms will be introduced and words we have used in the past may have new or standardized meanings. "ROSS Speak" is a new section in the newsletter to help sort out some of the jargon. We've tried to make it fun by creating a crossword puzzle. Answers may be found below.



Across

2. Resource Ordering and Status System (abbrev.).

3. A pre-identified unit from which you can order resources without going through your GACC (two words).

5. When two existing incidents are combined into one with one of the incidents becoming the surviving incident.

7. A division of government ranging from national to city.

9. A computer function that provides a list of options from which the user may select the appropriate item (two words).

Down

1. A person who represents the Dispatch or IRM community and serves as ROSS ambassador.

4. Three categories of these are in ROSS; fixed wing, helicopters, and air service.

6. To pull back a request from the dispatch office it is placed with.

8. A pre-established list of resource items, classifications and qualifications.

Answers:

Across:

2 ROSS
3 Selection Area
5 Merge
7 Agency
9 Pick List

Down:

1 Partner
4 Aircraft
6 Retrieve
8 Catalog