

2002 Calendar

September

- ROSS Version 1.2.4 released 9/23

October

- ROSS exhibit at National Association of State Foresters Meeting: 9/31 - 10/3 Burlington, VT
- ROSS Briefing for Eastern Area stakeholders: 10/1 Burlington, VT
- ROSS exhibit at USDA Technology Showcase: 10/9-10 Washington DC
- ROSS Briefing at California, Nevada & Hawaii Fire Council Meeting: 10/23 Reno, NV
- ROSS SME Meeting at Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center: 10/22-23 Minden, NV
- ROSS SME/Western Great Basin Dispatchers Meeting: 10/24 Minden, NV
- ROSS Meeting with Colorado EMS Agencies: 10/28 Golden, CO

November

- ROSS Core Team Meeting: 11/5-7 Lakewood, CO

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ROSS Dispatch Training Kicks Into High Gear

Several ROSS Dispatch training sessions were postponed this summer due to high national fire activity and agency travel restrictions imposed at the end of the fiscal year. Now that these events are behind us, Geographic Areas and the ROSS Team are making a big push to train the remainder of the dispatching workforce. ROSS Status and ROSS Dispatch should be implemented in most dispatch offices by the end of 2003.

Beginning Monday October 7, a weeklong ROSS Dispatch training course was held in Atlanta for 20 new ROSS Coaches from the Southern Area. Students represented three federal agencies and two state agencies, and came from 11 states. A two-week session began on Tuesday of the same week in Phoenix to train 16 new instructors and coaches from the Southwest Area. The first week was devoted to classroom instruction, hands-on practice and student exercises. The second week's program consisted of ROSS practice sessions, instructors teaching practice techniques, and implementation planning for the Southwest Area. The 16 new instructor/coaches represented three state and federal agencies from various offices in Arizona and New Mexico.



Pat Boucher coaches Florida dispatchers Marci Glover, Ava Young and Evelyn Libby (left to right)

A total of 18 additional ROSS Dispatch courses are currently scheduled through the end of the year in the Southern, Southwest and Northwest Areas, and over 20 additional ROSS Dispatch courses are planned for 2003. For a list of scheduled courses, please check out our on-line course calendar at <http://ross.nwcg.gov>. Click on the the Training tab and then Training Schedule, or contact Rob Juhola at 303-439-0336.

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November

- ROSS Meeting with Eastern Area Coordination Group: 11/12-14 Omaha, NE
- ROSS Briefing at National Cache Managers Meeting: 11/18 Las Vegas, NV

December

- ROSS Briefing at National Interagency Systems Meeting: 12/3-7 Las Vegas, NV
- ROSS Core Team Meeting: 12/10-13 San Antonio, TX
- ROSS briefing and hands-on sessions at National Coordinators Meeting: 12/10-13 San Antonio, TX
- ROSS SME Meeting 12/16-20 Lakewood, CO
- ROSS testing of Version 1.2.5: 12/23/2002-1/24/2003

ROSS User Roles Updated

ROSS user roles are based on the level of access that a user needs to perform their job at their normal duty station, and have evolved throughout the development of the application. Assigning each user the appropriate roles is critical to both system security and proper functionality.

Some key points about user roles:

- A user may have multiple roles.
- The roles determine which screens, menus and drop-down menu items appear.
- Without the right roles, a user cannot create, read, update or delete records from the appropriate screens.

The following roles are currently available:

Basic User

Every ROSS user requires the Basic User role as a minimum. A Basic User may access the ROSS Home Screen, Reports and Help. This would be the only role to grant users, such as agency managers,

who would run reports and would not need to run other ROSS functions.

Account Manager

The Account Manager is responsible for establishing and managing user accounts and their applicable roles. Other responsibilities include establishing Web/Phone Status Access and ensuring adherence to the Rules of Behavior as outlined in the ROSS Security Plan. This role is crucial to maintaining the security of the system.

Catalog Manager

The ROSS Catalog is a pre-established list of resource items, classifications and qualifications. There are five catalogs: Aircraft, Crew, Equipment, Overhead and Supply. Each catalog is then divided into categories, and each category contains catalog items.

The Catalog screen allows an authorized user to create, edit, or delete catalog categories, items and/or configurations. The National Catalog Manager at NICC sets up and maintains the national catalogs, which cannot be changed or deleted by other users. The Catalog Manager Role for Geographic Area and Local Catalogs has not been activated at this time.

Data Administrator

The Data Administrator is responsible for entering resources, organizations, contracts and other data. The Data Administrator role will differ depending upon the location. For example, the NICC Data Administrator enters all national contracts, resources and NWCG resource configurations. A Local Data Administrator enters any local contracts, resources and unique resource configurations.

Dispatch Manager

When activated (late 2003), the Dispatch Manager will permit a dispatch manager to merge incidents, create/manage complex incidents and activate System Override. System Override permits one dispatch office to grant another dispatch office the authority to perform actions on its behalf. This feature is designed for use during workload

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ROSS User Roles Updated

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overload or system outage situations.

Dispatcher

The Dispatcher checks/maintains the status of resource items, creates incidents and requests, assigns resource items to incidents, and records travel arrangements. The Dispatcher may add documentation on actions taken.

ROSS Helpdesk

The System Administrator at NICC and the ROSS/DMS Helpdesk use the ROSS Helpdesk role to run audit logs for review. Audit logs document the actions performed by logged-on users.

Qualifications Import Manager

The Qualifications Import Manager is responsible for running the utility programs to import/export qualification data for overhead resources. The three qualifications systems include: SACS (Shared Application Computer Systems), IQS (Incident Qualification System) and Redcard.

Reference Data Administrator

The Reference Data Administrator is responsible for establishing Political Unit types (e.g., city, county, state, province, nation, etc.) and populating Reference Data tables. Reference Data is pre-loaded data that the user can select from drop-down menus (e.g., aircraft type, employment status, and incident type, etc.).

System Administrator

The System Administrator monitors the system, designates Screens and Roles, and performs routine maintenance, such as data import/export.

Selection Area Manager

The Selection Area Manager is responsible for maintaining the list of other offices from which a dispatch office can view and/or order resources. The application allows expansion or contraction of selection areas, from which resources can be

ordered, because of different national or geographic area preparedness levels. ROSS also permits designation of specific ordering privileges by catalog and category (e.g., ordering of aircraft or air tankers only).

Status Only Dispatch

The Status Only Dispatch role allows units that are not using ROSS for resource ordering to update the status of their resources and to permit the unit to authorize an office that is dispatching with ROSS to process their resource requests.

For additional information on ROSS User Roles, please view the entire “System Role Descriptions” document by accessing the “Documents Library” at the ROSS website: <http://ross.nwcg.gov/>.

Helpdesk Corner by David Kee



It's time again for another update from the ROSS/DMS Helpdesk. In previous editions of the Newsletter we've discussed resources available to customers via the ROSS/DMS Helpdesk website such as Heat Self-Service and Knowlix. The Helpdesk website can be reached by opening the ROSS Homepage (http://ross.nwcg.gov/user_support.htm), clicking on the User Support tab, and then clicking on the “UTA ROSS Helpdesk” logo.

Recently, we've had an increase in the number of questions related to entering contracts in the ROSS application. Following are some things to consider before beginning the data entry process for contracts in ROSS.

- Which ROSS organization owns the contract?
- Do any other dispatch offices need access to the contract?

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Helpdesk Corner

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- What is the contract type to be entered (e.g., Exclusive Use, Call When Needed or Purchase Agreement)?
- Is all the vendor information available?
- Is all the resource information available for the vendor and contract being created?

One common question is who should create the vendor organization and the contract. The ROSS organization that owns the contract is the one that should create both the vendor organization and the contract in ROSS. That ROSS organization can give access to other dispatch offices, which can then enter additional resources and/or contracts as necessary.

A vendor must be entered only once in ROSS. Before creating a vendor, a ROSS user should:

1. Search for the vendor name.
2. If the same name exists, view the address and phone number to determine if it's the same company.
3. If it is the same company with more than one contract in multiple locations, the second dispatch organization can just add the contract to the vendor organization. It is suggested that the managing dispatch organization be contacted first to discuss this.

If an exact match of the vendor name is found and it is determined that it is not the same company, the name of the second vendor organization that is entered will have to be modified somewhat for ROSS to accept it. For example, if "AAA Porta-Potties" exists in Ashville, NC and a different vendor with the same name in Elko, NV has previously been entered in ROSS, the dispatch organization in Asheville can enter the second vendor as "AAA Porta-Potties Asheville."

Two ROSS Tips recently were developed to help customers tackle some of the most common questions. ROSS Tip # 12 "Vendor Owned Resources" and ROSS Tip #13 "ROSS Contracts" can be viewed at the ROSS homepage by opening

the "ROSS Tips and Tricks" link (<http://ross.nwcg.gov/rosstips.htm>). Please review these ROSS tips and call the Helpdesk with any questions or needed clarification.

One last reminder, as of October 1, 2002 the Helpdesk has switched back to our core hours of operation. These hours are 0800 – 2000 ET Monday – Friday, with emergency support after 2000 hours and on Saturday and Sunday.

As always, please don't hesitate to call the ROSS/DMS Helpdesk at 866-224-7677 or email at helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov.

ROSS User's Guide Update In Progress

A complete overhaul of the *ROSS User's Guide* is in the works! This guide explains how to use ROSS in a step-by-step format and is organized based on the ROSS menu:

- Section 1, "Introduction," explains how to download the ROSS application and how to use the guide. This section also outlines special tips and helpful information that will allow you to use ROSS and the ROSS User's Guide to your best advantage.
- Section 2, "Administration," explains all ROSS screens and functions found in the Administration menu.
- Section 3, "Resource," explains all ROSS screen and functions under the Resource menu.

Section 2 has nearly been completed. Members of the ROSS training team are reviewing it for clarity and user-friendliness. Section 3 is under development. More sections will be made available in the near future as ROSS nears full implementation. When finished, this user's guide will be nearly 400 pages in length and will explain nearly everything you would ever want to know about ROSS.

The latest available *ROSS User's Guide* is available on the "User Support" tab of the ROSS home page at <http://ross.nwcg.gov>.