

## 2004 Calendar

### September

- Testing of Version 2.2
- ROSS Partners  
Conference Call 9/16
- NASF Meeting 9/27-29

### October

- ROSS Partners  
Conference Call 10/21

## ROSS to I-Suite Data Sharing Released

The I-Suite Project Team recently released an I-Suite update that allows for the import of ROSS resource data. The new ROSS to I-Suite export was successfully tested on the Andrew Incident in August and was demonstrated to several Type 1 Incident Management Teams supporting Hurricane Frances relief efforts.

ROSS data required at check-in to an incident is exported to a file located in the "I-Suite" folder at the ROSS Data Delivery System. The file is imported into I-Suite with an I-Suite status of "filled but not checked in". When the resource reports to the incident base camp, the Status Check-in Recorder changes the status to "checked in" and completes the remainder of the I-Suite fields required at the incident. The goal of this new functionality for I-Suite is to reduce input errors, improve data integrity, and give the incoming IMT an up-to-date idea of what resources to expect. When the import was demonstrated the response was, "WOW, this will save hours of data entry time!"

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## Version 2.2 Coming Soon!

ROSS Version 2.2 emphasizes the ability for the local dispatcher to complete data cleanup at the end of the year. The primary focus of this version will be additional administration functionality. A user will be able to mark an item as "removed" (in other words, no longer be able to use) once it meets certain criteria. Once the current year's database has been archived, a removed item can be deleted allowing for a clean database to start the new year.

Additional new functionality will be minimal for this version, but will include:

- Place Up direct ordering for unique organizations
- The ability to merge duplicate resources
- The ability to transfer a person
- A redesign of the Services tab on the Pending Request screen

Testing for Version 2.2 will begin in September with deployment expected for this fall.

## Versions 2.0, 2.1 and 2.1.1 Successfully Deployed

On May 20, 2004 Version 2.0 of ROSS was deployed. The focus of this version was on system server replacement, system server software upgrades and correction of a few bugs from previous versions, with the overall goal of increasing performance. Specifically, this version:

- replaced and added system servers
- upgraded from Oracle 8i to Oracle 9i
- implemented IBM Websphere
- upgraded to Versata 5.5
- added application query tuning
- increased security

The new servers have been performing flawlessly since deployment. There continue to be network issues however, and the ROSS team is working with the various agency network specialists to isolate and improve the network bottlenecks.

Specific application changes in Version 2.0 include:

- Tool Tips are now displayed when hovering over a non-text button.
- Multiple adjoining rows in a grid may be selected by clicking and dragging, or by selecting the first row and while holding the “shift” key selecting the last row.
- The Maximize and Resize windows buttons may be used to control the size of the ROSS window.
- Typing the first letter of the desired item in most drop-down lists causes the list to jump to the first item beginning with that letter.
- The Pick Organization button has been activated to permit changing a providing

organization for Overhead Resources. (See *ROSS Tip PER-2004-1* for more information).

- The IQS Import screen will be the primary method for importing qualifications data from all incident qualifications systems.

### Version 2.1 and Version 2.1.1

After the hardware and system software was successfully deployed with Version 2.0, subsequent Versions 2.1 and 2.1.1 were released in late June to fix critical software problems, address reporting needs and continue development. For specifics see [http://ross.nwcg.gov/release\\_notes.htm](http://ross.nwcg.gov/release_notes.htm). Some highlights of Version 2.1 include:

- Named Requests
- Functionality that displays EFF/AD resources on the Pending Request screen by default
- New functionality on the Edit Request dialog box
- New and/or improved functionality on the Pending Requests Screen
- Improvements to the ordering chain
- The ability to reassign groups regardless of the status of the subordinate requests
- The ability to release resources from non-local incidents (restricted by role)
- Improvements in dealing with pre-positioned resources
- Changes to the printed Resource Order

Version 2.1.1 was primarily a maintenance release with the main objective to correct critical software problems.

### Updated Tips!

The ROSS Tips have been updated to match the current version of the software. ROSS Tips also have a new naming scheme to help users better identify the Tips they are interested in. Check it out on the web at <http://ross.nwcg.gov/rosstips.htm>

## Helpdesk Corner by David Kee



The first half of 2004 has flown by and fire season is in full swing.

The ROSS Helpdesk has been busy so far this year. We have been getting ready for the fire season, answering calls, working on data clean-up and moving offices.

We have been updating the online knowledge base Knowlix® with lots of entries from last fire season. Be sure to check it out on the ROSS website. Click on the User Support Tab, then click on the ROSS Helpdesk logo, and from there select the link to the Knowlix® knowledge base. The ROSS knowledge base has nearly 260 ROSS entries.

Call volume for the first seven months of the year has been steady and increasing each month. Call volume since May has been over 1000 calls and the volume for both June and July was well over 1600 calls. These have been the highest call totals since last September. Please check out all our published reports on the helpdesk homepage under ROSS Reports. Click the Helpdesk logo from the User Support tab on the ROSS homepage and then click ROSS Reports on the top banner.

**YES, WE HAVE MOVED.** All your favorite Helpdesk Technicians have a new home in Herndon, Virginia about 20 miles west of our previous location in Arlington. The move was done on Friday, June 4 and the helpdesk began answering calls in Herndon early Saturday morning, June 5. With this move are two changes you may notice when you call the helpdesk:

1. When you call the toll-free helpdesk number 866-224-7677, you will now hear a recording with two menu options. Press 2 for ROSS server status information or Press 1 for a helpdesk technician. You can make your selection as soon as the recording begins.

2. The previous server status line has been eliminated and ROSS server status is available from the main helpdesk number. This should make things easier and give everyone fewer numbers to remember.

That's all for this time. Please give us a call if you need any assistance or if you have any suggestions for the 2004 fire season. The helpdesk is waiting for your call at 866-224-7677, or your email at [helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov](mailto:helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov).

## Change Board Meets

The ROSS Change Board met in Denver the week of May 3 to discuss the many suggestions that have been received through the suggestion inbox, training sessions, and ROSS update informational meetings. Some of the suggestions have been addressed in previous, current or future versions of ROSS and were identified as such with no further review needed. Others were deemed as basic operation and maintenance items, while some individual suggestions were categorized as enhancements. Board members will prepare summaries of the enhancements and once complete these will be placed on the ROSS homepage for information. These items will become the Investment Segments that will be submitted for the fiscal year 2007 budget.

The Change Board spent one day at Lockheed Martin shadowing the Subject Matter Experts testing Version 2.1. They received hands-on experience and gained firsthand knowledge of the in-depth and detailed testing that the new versions are subjected to prior to release. Change Board members were quoted as saying, "they don't pay those testers enough to do that" and "that was the most grueling thing I've ever done".

A listing of the Change Board members and contact information can be found on the ROSS website ([ross.nwcg.gov/changeboard](http://ross.nwcg.gov/changeboard)). Please feel free to contact any one of the members with questions or suggestions. Suggestions can also be submitted to [suggestions@dms.nwcg.gov](mailto:suggestions@dms.nwcg.gov).



## Question of the Month

### *How is application testing done?*

Testing for the ROSS application is a very structured process. The ROSS team works with the contractor to develop a set of requirements for each version release. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) then develop test cases to run against the alpha version of the new releases.

Four-to-five SMEs methodically process the test cases and document their findings. Each test is run four-to-five times (each tester runs it once) so that there is independent assessment of the test results. A requirement is rated either pass or fail. If the requirement fails, the SME documents what caused the error and provides the information to the contractor. The contractor will either fix the problem immediately or schedule several fixes at once. A new release is provided to the testing group and the process starts again. The actual testing process usually takes between four and five weeks prior to a new version release.

In addition to regular test cases, regression testing also takes place to ensure that changes or new functionality does not “break” functions in the existing application. The regression testing is referred to as “ad hoc” testing because no formal test cases are designed, but rather the testers use their skills and knowledge to test the typical functions involved with statusing and ordering resources. The ROSS team is in the process of developing regression test cases that can be used for all future releases. They are expected to start using these for Version 2.2.

After all issues are assessed and documented, decisions are made as to how much can be fixed prior to release. Occasionally, a release will come out with documented known issues and “work arounds”. When this occurs, a maintenance release will be issued as soon as the issues are resolved.

## ROSS Data Delivery System Available

The ROSS Data Delivery System is a repository that contains summarized data, presented in an Excel spreadsheet or Access database and filed by dispatch offices in the following categories:

- **INCIDENTS** - details about individual incidents, including geographic information.
- **REQUEST STATUS** - details about resource requests; including the individual resource assigned.
- **PENDING REQUESTS** - general information for incident requests that are pending.
- **RESOURCES** - general and specific information regarding individual resources.
- **RESOURCE HISTORY** - details on all assignments performed by individual resources.
- **RESOURCE QUALIFICATIONS** - detailed information on individual resource qualifications.
- **INCIDENT SUMMARY** - summary level information for incidents and requests on those incidents.
- **CONTRACT ORGANIZATIONS** - basic information on contracts and the related roles(s) of dispatch centers.
- **CONTRACT RESOURCES** - basic information on contract resources.
- **TRAVEL** - provides details for travel to and from incidents.

Data in the repository is updated a minimum of every 24 hours (see webpage for update times by category) and can be used for a variety of inquiries, reports and analysis. A link to the Data Delivery site is on the ROSS website: <http://ross.nwcg.gov>. You must have a valid DMS username and password to use the ROSS Data Delivery System. User instructions, a data dictionary and video presentations are also available on the site.

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