

ROSS Partner Conference Call Notes
July 17, 2003

Participants:

Alaska: Bob Dickerson, Rick DuPuis
California: Julie Vogan
Great Basin: Lani Williams, Raoul, Julie Landreth
Southern: Angie Taulbee, Pat Boucher, Ira Jolly, Wendy Tolman
NICC: Kim Christensen
NIFC: Neal Hitchcock
ROSS Team: Nancy DeLong, Rod Chaffee, Mary Ann Szymoniak, Andy Gray

Note: Any information received after the call is shown in bold type below.

Business Community Update- Neal Hitchcock

- Attended several meetings with key parties in Washington, DC this week discussing ROSS and other issues.
 - APHIS (USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service) interested in ROSS for status – but no implementation until agreements in place (maybe this fall)
 - Discussed network issues and effects on ROSS, competitive sourcing, etc. with FS Deputy Director of Information Resources (Deputy CIO) Joan Golden
 - Briefed FS Deputy Chief Robin Thompson on ROSS. Held very frank discussions about ROSS performance and improvement efforts
- Some issues and problems
 - System performance is currently unacceptable
 - User's suggestions for improving usability
 - FS and BLM network performance effects on ROSS
 - For example: Nevada BLM
 - Hardware sizing and interim support and efforts to make it work
 - System was apparently sized for number of users, but not number of transactions
 - Budget process prevented us from purchasing and installing larger servers – consequently we're having to do it now
 - IBM installing processors with increased capacity this week
 - L-M, NITC, Oracle, IBM, etc. all working on performance fixes to improve current performance
- This is a tough time for everyone
 - We'll keep working on improvements
 - Keep focused on how to make it work
 - I'm interested in software issues and how ROSS is being used
 - Document change management suggestions

Project Update – Nancy DeLong:

- Version 1.2.5.7 has improved speed, but not where it should be

- New processor should more than double the power (**but not necessarily double the speed**)
- We saw 60% reduction in load on server after new version installed yesterday
- We'll work with the National Coordinators on timing of equipment installation
 - **Note: installation of new servers had to occur mid-day on July 18, 2003 because of the availability of the IBM Field Engineer and when the new equipment was ready. The National Coordinators agreed that performance was a priority and it needed to be done as soon as possible.**
- Things users can do to help:
 - Notifier frequency (i.e. each notification impacts the server, so please set them appropriately for what you need and read the notifications so the notifier doesn't continue to hit the server every 15 minutes for example)
 - Narrowing filters saves processor time (e.g. enter as much known info in the fields as possible before filtering/searching)
 - If you can't get on to ROSS, please notify us - it could prevent delays in resetting servers and other quick fixes
 - Work with your contractors and overhead resources
 - Establishing web status log-on, profiles, passwords, etc.
 - They are flooding the Helpdesk for this assistance and only dispatch centers can do this for them
 - Call volume now is huge – please be patient with the Helpdesk
 - Keep sending your ROSS ideas/suggestions to: ross_suggestion@dms.nwcg.gov
 - They will be reviewed and processed – but not immediately
- Installing the update yesterday was too slow for everyone
 - ROSS update files were competing with FS FFIS and GIS data for network space yesterday
 - To mitigate this issue, we put a copy of the install file on the FS ftp web site

Implementation Update – Nancy DeLong:

- It's an exciting, interesting and scary time
- Please keep helping and encouraging folks
- Number of Helpdesk calls by functions reveals nature of work (e.g. resource reassignment is popular topic today)

Question – Andy Gray: Support Teams and individuals are being moved around to dispatch centers, GACCs and expanded dispatches to help them use ROSS. What can the Partners do to help?

Response – Nancy DeLong: We have eight people out right now with others identified to go out next week. Don't have to be a super-user to help – can send a couple of somewhat experienced ROSS users as a team. The Helpdesk can use assistance, too. If you or someone you know can lend a hand, let me know (cell phone # 208-866-7061).

Question – Kim Christensen: Is there any flexibility on the timing of the IBM server installation?

Response – Nancy DeLong: We are trying for early morning, but have to work around schedule of IBM-certified personnel.

Question – Kim Christensen: Can updates be timed to minimize network competition?

Response – Nancy DeLong: Jon Skeels is working with agency people to do this. In the future, ROSS update files will be posted on multiple FTP sites so that not all users are trying to access the same site simultaneously.

Business Team Update – Rod Chaffee:

- The SMEs have been out assisting field users – mainly in the Western U.S.
- Working on version 1.2.6 as we can

Question – Andy Gray: Will v 1.2.6 allow incidents to assign request numbers and what's the release schedule look like for that version?

Response – Rod Chaffee: Yes. Barring major issues between now and then, SMEs should get the version for testing in three weeks, so release would be no sooner than mid-August

Comment – Andy Gray: We all need to keep in mind that every interim release and fix potentially delays the subsequent releases.

ROSS Partners – Andy Gray:

- Issue: vendors contacting ROSS Partners (via posted contact information) to offer services
 - Has anyone else had similar solicitations, and if so, should this info be removed from the web?
 - *Decision - no apparent widespread problem exists so we'll leave this info on the web.*

Other Business:

Issue:

Vendor points-of-contact and contract activation authority

Discussion points:

- Vendors contact dispatchers to request web status but it's not always clear which offices should be point of contact for them (e.g. national, regional and local contracts and EERAs)
- Portable retardant bases are on national contracts and Rick Squires at NICC gave them "global access"
- Should dispatchers be able to hire a vendor with an EERA from another area?
- If it's not your office's EERA you shouldn't hire them
- Some vendors preposition their buses all over the country
- What about OAS listed SEATS? Some are on OAS source list and located in the Southern Area but SACC can't enter them in ROSS. Vendors are not happy.
- We traditionally place orders through the system for T3 helicopters and SEATS (on OAS source list) based on the area in which they're located
- Dispatches/coordinators need to make decisions on this and then implement in ROSS

- *Recommendation: Kim Christensen will address this issue with the Coordinators and Incident Business people to determine resolution. Coordinators will guide implementing this in ROSS.*

Question – Wendy Tolman: How do I search for vendors in ROSS?

Response – Rod Chaffee: You can do that only when you create a new contract. You can't search the whole country for contracts – only the ones you have authority to activate.

Information Item:

Julie Vogan (USFS Calif) is working with John King (CDF) on California ROSS implementation plan.

- Goal is to work together
- Will use several people to evaluate ROSS
- Working on productive meeting agendas and dates
- Tentative meeting date: Nov 17-21 in McLellan, CA

Next Conference Call: August 21 at same time; with same phone number/access code.