

ROSS Partner and GACC Roles

May 8, 2000

Geographic Area Coordinators and NICC Assistant Center Managers:

As the “ROSS Partner” program gets underway, a few questions have arisen as to the role of the ROSS Partners – specifically how their role “meshes” with that of the Geographic Area Coordinators. We spoke about this briefly on a GACC/NICC conference call two weeks ago, and it’s clear that some of you share a concern about the ROSS Partner role, as well.

When Neal and Jon came up with the idea for “ROSS Partners”, their vision was that several key people around the country, working for various agencies at different levels in the dispatch community, would become knowledgeable in the ROSS system, and help the ROSS team in designing and implementing the system within the dispatch community. They hoped that these people, working as “product champions”, could take some of the workload off of the GACCs in preparing the dispatch community for ROSS, and in providing input to the ROSS Team, through a ROSS Partner Coordinator (myself), on how ROSS can best be delivered in their Geographical Area and NICC.

The “Partners of ROSS Interest Announcement” stated the following:

“Mission Statement:

Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) Partners will promote and encourage dialog between the ROSS Project Team and the Dispatch and Fire Communities.”

“Participant Role:

ROSS partners will champion the ROSS Project by acting as a liaison between the ROSS Project Team and the Dispatch/Fire Communities. They will become focal points for ROSS within their areas and assist the project by giving briefings and disseminating information about ROSS.”

“ROSS partners will answer questions about the ROSS system by explaining how it is being built, how it will work, and what the entire process was from start to finish. They will identify how the ROSS Team was selected and will periodically work with the ROSS Team during the build and implementation phases of the project.”

ROSS Partners must be able to attend up to 5 days of ROSS Partner Training, and commit to at least 2 years of acting as a ROSS Partner in their area, periodically working with the ROSS Team.”

The enthusiasm and diversity of experience represented by the ROSS Partners (46 in number), is truly impressive. You have selected great people for this job. Each GACC (and NICC) now has at least one of their Center’s employees working as a ROSS Partner. At the ROSS Partner training in Kansas City, several brainstorming sessions produced the following roles that the Partners feel they can help provide:

- Short and Long-term communications with their dispatch constituents on the ROSS project
- Testing ROSS
- Identifying implementation issues; developing and communicating solutions
- Training the dispatch community on ROSS
- Support to ROSS users
- Coaching ROSS users

One specific activity the Partners identified that they would like to do is to coordinate and/or conduct ROSS training at Dispatchers' Workshops. While the Partners are one "national group", those from one Geographical Area (or NICC) will obviously be able to coordinate their efforts within their area in order to most effectively prepare for ROSS. They have asked that the Geographic Area Coordinators help them by providing support and coverage when they are doing ROSS Partner activities.

The tools the ROSS Team is providing the Partners to fulfill their mission include: ROSS plans, briefing documents and ROSS Power Point presentations posted on the ROSS Website; periodic updates and "articles" on ROSS and e-mail messages exchanged between myself and between the ROSS Partners. The main idea is to keep everyone (including dispatchers, IRM people, IMTs, cache managers, fire managers, Geographic Area Coordinators and NICC) up to date on the progress of ROSS development and implementation, and to share "what works" with everyone.

The tools that the Partners use will most likely be the same tools you will use in your day-to-day contacts within your network of people. I can't tell you how to interact with your ROSS Partners. This will need to evolve in each area and office. I will work with the rest of the ROSS Team in developing a "Blueprint" for the Partners – describing the Partner Role, and some rough timeframes. The Partners have asked for such a document by mid-May, and I'll do my best to put it together. This should help you and the Partners understand the expectations that are being placed upon them.

Neal Hitchcock, as the Project Manager and Dispatch Community Leader, plays a key role in representing the dispatch community as ROSS is delivered. The creation of ROSS Partners does not diminish the importance of your personal involvement in the ROSS project. Your continued interaction with Neal, and with the Partners, is needed to ensure success.

Please feel free to contact me if I can help you in any way.

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