

ROSS Partner Conference Call Notes
February 20, 2003

Participants:

- ROSS Team—Jon Skeels, Nancy DeLong, Mary Ann Szymoniak, Rod Chaffee, Sue Roussopoulos, Janet Gradwell, Rex Alford, Andy Gray
- NICC—Rick Squires, Linda Roose, Lani Williams
- Eastern—Marcia Smith, Kathy Miles, Laura McIntyre-Kelly, Julie Landreth, Gloria
- Eastern Great Basin—Ed Gray
- Northwest—Phil Cardin
- Northern California—Tom Evans
- Southwest—Cheryl Dickson
- Rocky Mountain—Debbie Bozarth, Flint Cheney, Rob Juhola, Jay Wickham
- Southern—Pat Boucher
- Others: Dave Milbrat (Business Lead – ICBS Re-engineering project)

Note: Additional “post-conference call information” is shown in bold text below.

Business Community Update – (Neal Hitchcock unable to participate in call)

Project update—Jon Skeels:

- ROSS Project leadership is meeting with BLM representatives and NWCG IRM Program Management Office (PMO) staff this week on required Office of Management and Budget (OMB) documentation.
- SMEs are currently testing ROSS version 1.2.5.
 - Another round of testing will take place in Denver next week.
 - Depending on how next week’s testing goes, we could release v 1.2.5 on or about April 7.
 - We’ll have a better idea of the release date by March 7.
- Performance tuning is being done on ROSS. Ray Nelson has reported seeing an improvement in application speed.
- Qualifications import:
 - IQS import will be turned back on in the next few weeks. A new IQS export utility is being developed by the IQS Team and will replace the export utility developed by the ROSS Team. This new utility should be available by May.
 - REDCARD - Thanks to Karl Shell for his help. Hopefully the problems some offices have experienced (additional qualifications

appearing for individuals will be solved next week. **UPDATE: The REDCARD Import utility should be back online by March 7, 2003.**

- Updated SACS data is posted on the ROSS web site (URL: <http://ross.nwcg.gov/> on the Download Application tab) and is being refreshed about once a month. The SACS Advisory Group will be deciding how often this will happen.

Implementation/Training Update—Nancy DeLong:

- Andy mailed out bin item notes from Denver Partner/Primary Contact meeting (Tom Evans also sent his notes to meeting participants).
- How are practice sessions going?
 - Northwest – Phil Cardin: practice sessions being done and well received. About 25 to 40% participation. Getting more and more comfortable as they go along. The main players are participating. Still conducting training sessions.
 - Eastern – Gloria: in January had two-week instructor training in Milwaukee. Everyone retained a lot and it went well. We had training this month in Newtown Square, PA.
 - Southern – Pat Boucher: two weeks ago finished training in Louisiana. Next session is in Tennessee. Folks have been helping with Columbia Shuttle incident, so no time to practice right now. More training sessions in March, May and June.
 - Eastern Great Basin – Ed Gray: on March 16 will start training for five weeks. Good response. About 20 people scheduled per training session. Nancy said ROSS team could participate in upcoming conference call between GACC managers regarding implementation timing.

Ed: Issue for Eastern and Western Great Basin Areas: because of changes coming in v 1.2.5, should implementation be delayed until after this summer? Jon: no value to postpone training. Main change in v 1.2.5 is incident numbering. No major impact to training sessions, so he recommends they proceed with training and implementation. As far as roster and other updates coming in v 1.2.5, the team is developing video stream instruction tool.

Ed: training facilities, hotels, etc. are booked. A lot of training slots are taken already, and others may not get in. Ed would like to proceed.

April 20-25: Great Basin dispatch workshop.

- Southwest – Cheryl Dickson: have been training since December – most core people trained in two sessions a month with 10-16 people per class. Training and practice sessions are going well but folks are becoming tired of practicing.

Southwest Area will begin doing status when REDCARD problems are fixed.

A lot of people know what's going on and are getting familiar with program. Jon advised Cheryl that they could go ahead and start using status for all but the organizations that are experiencing REDCARD problems (not all offices' data is corrupt).

Center Managers conference call at 1 P.M. today – Nancy will participate.

- Northern California – Tom Evans: they have been busy responding to volcanoes, APHIS Exotic Newcastle Disease and Shuttle Columbia recovery so haven't done much with ROSS since Denver meeting. No progress to report
- Rocky Mountain - Flint Cheney: eight of ten training sessions done – dispatch workshop next week has five to six hours dedicated to ROSS. End of March building a scenario that will take a week to run – 40 incidents in Rocky Mountain Area to give dispatch centers week-long ROSS practice session. In South Dakota, Jay ran their first practice incident today – moved a few resources around – went well.

Jon: folks may have gotten a “Java Memory Overflow” error during this week's training. Memory allocation has since been adjusted so it shouldn't happen again.

- NICC – Rick Squires: very busy, so haven't had time to work on ROSS. Will continue to plug away at data admin stuff. Selection area work will be done next.

Question (Linda Roose): I had to rebuild a machine. When I downloaded ROSS production and practice, it automatically put icons on desktop, which made installation process go quicker. Is this a new feature?

Answer (Jon Skeels): ROSS Icons have always been installed to the desktop. If you have had situations where they have not appeared, it may be related to security on the client platform.

- ROSS Readiness Checklist – Nancy sent a revised copy and Flint will post it when he has a chance (probably Monday). Added “Validate unit ID” item to the checklist

- Training sessions are going well – lots of them scheduled...each GACC needs to build strong support – very key – doing great job
- ROSS Team will continue to have team member present the first and second time you teach a session, if possible. Their role is not to teach, but to represent the team and answer questions.

Reminder from Beth Grey Cloud: when you schedule sessions, be sure to check with Shep Crim (office: 208-947-3711; cell phone: 208-484-4923). We need to ensure availability of the ROSS Training application and we want to make sure people are available by phone for assistance. Rules of Behavior document will be posted on the ROSS Website by March 7, 2003.

- Document needs to be signed by every user and a copy kept in each office using ROSS.
- Security audits are happening in offices and they will ask for that document. The document needs to be resigned annually..

Question: Where is the ROSS release letter from BLM?

Answer (Jon Skeels): we had many of the parties together yesterday in Denver and discussed that. Software is not built and released like it used to be. Agency IRM plays the key role in approving software for release rather than, for example, an agency fire director, but a fire director can send a letter recommending/approving use, too. John Gebhard and Ken Reninger said they'd oversee process. Expect letter to be signed, and agreed to by BLM state directors, within 30 days from now. Letters will be posted on ROSS website. NWCG release letter is now posted and FS letter will be posted by March 7, 2003. **UPDATE: the BLM letter has been written and distributed to the Partners. It will be posted within a week.**

Question: How can a supervisor help someone get through the training?

Answer (Nancy DeLong): Beth is working on a process for this. "Training Paths" will be developed for Dispatch Recorder, Support Dispatcher, Supervisory Dispatcher, etc. and will include the ROSS function to be learned, the appropriate ROSS screen, and what tools would be used to learn that function. The goal would be to have this posted on the web with links on the tools to be used.

Question: What are the best options for an area that implements ROSS but some offices use ROSS and some don't?

Answer (Jon Skeels): the information will get into ROSS one way or another. A status only dispatch office will keep status on resources, but a parent dispatch office (e.g. SWCC) would have a fuller load. SWCC would assign the resource in ROSS and print copies of orders for status only offices.

(The following sentences don't make a lot of sense, maybe you can rewrite so it does?) - Top folks are dispatching – folks below might not have to. Filling an order from the top, they will receive the request, place it externally, list of dispatch centers, status only, pick up phone and call them – fill the request/external – bring up people on the list and fill it. So, they are doing the job for the centers below them. A document will be prepared for the alternatives.

Question: What features do we need to use in version 1.2.5?

Answer (Jon Skeels): Keep in mind once version 1.2.5 comes out, the only additional functionality you need to use is the incident numbering. Roster and prepositioning will also be on v 1.2.5 but you can still dispatch without using them. The supply module will be added in v 1.2.6.

- Jon: We've been asked by the fire directors to report where the issues are (barriers to implementation).
 - We've had around 100 training sessions so far and consider ourselves 50 percent done with dispatch training.
 - There will be issues this first fire season and we know the transition won't always be smooth. We have a backup (paper) system but we need to bite the bullet and make the transition.
 - We'll be in close contact with NICC and GACCs and will monitor ROSS closely.
 - It's a partnership between all of us.
- Flint Cheney: In the Rocky Mountain Area implementation plan, any incident that happens before ROSS is implemented, will be done on paper orders through the life of the incident. After implementation, it'll be initiated in ROSS. We're waiting for v 1.2.5 before we turn ROSS on.

Andy: Any other implementation questions/comments?

- Rick Squires – Unit Identifier stuff - once we get updates into the proper format, it'll be posted on the web (March 1). When comparisons are done, they can make changes. We're done inputting all the air tankers.

Infrastructure Update— (Steve Simon not on call. No report)

Business Team Update— Rod Chaffee:

- The SMEs have been focusing on testing v1.2.5.
- Helping geographic areas with data review process to get up to speed for full implementation.
- Working with the Helpdesk on some issues.
- Getting ready for test session in Denver next week.

Partner Update – (Andy Gray):

- Welcome Nicole Montoya (Southwest) and Julie Landreth (Eastern Area) to the Partners.
- If anyone has developed ROSS practice scenarios they've used in their area, I'll share them with the rest of the Partners. Just send me an electronic version (e.g. Word document) and I'll either E-mail them or have Flint post them on the ROSS website.

Other questions/comments:

Tom Evans – California dispatch workshop is week of March 10th in San Diego. Dennis Derr will come to talk about ROSS.

Question (Pat Boucher): When version 1.2.5 goes into effect, will there be any change to any of the training scenarios? Pat has been doing some scenario revamping for upcoming sessions herself.

Answer (Nancy DeLong): Beth Grey Cloud is working on this with Lockheed. Not sure what the changes will be, but please send any suggestions to Beth. Materials will be on the web when updates are done.

Question (Pat Boucher): When demonstrating ROSS in class, students want hands-on for each unit. Pat uses basic scenarios she's built and has students follow along but sometimes students don't follow instructions and go off track and mess up the training data. How are the other instructors doing this?

Answer (Nancy DeLong): Beth has received comments that each class is different. Some won't follow along – they go off on their own way – so it's always a challenge.

Question (Flint Cheney): What's the latest on a National Park Service release letter?

Answer (Nancy DeLong): Nancy hasn't seen it yet but it should be out soon. John Gebhard (BLM) said he'd share a copy of the BLM letter with the other DOI NWCG agencies.

Next call—March 20th, same time, same number.