



# Huntsville-based Intergraph grows during adversity

By [Budd McLaughlin, The Huntsville Times](#)

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HUNTSVILLE, AL -- A little adversity can be a good thing.

At least, that's the credo that Intergraph President/CEO Halsey Wise follows.

And, seeing how the company has performed lately during the worst economic downturn of our generation, it's working out just fine.

"Companies are measured by how they perform in adversity," he said. "We challenged our people and the company. For our test, we used the metaphor 'rounding Cape Horn.' "

The company, which has about 3,800 employees in Huntsville, saw its earnings grow from \$42 million in 2003, when Wise was named CEO, to nearly \$190 million last year and an expected \$200 million this year. Intergraph also increased its R&D (spending \$500 million since '03) and filed for 150 patents in that time.

"We increased our R&D and we spent time with our customers," said Wise while noting the company's customer satisfaction rates were the highest ever. "Never let a customer fail.

"While a lot of guys hit the brakes, we were on the gas."

Stepping on the gas is a major part of the company's "Now, Next, After Next" strategy, he said.

"We are real happy where we are and we're in the middle of 'after next,' " he said. "We've never been more relevant - 1 in 12 people around the world are protected by Intergraph security systems. Our financial health is extremely strong.

"I'm very bullish."

For his efforts (and the company's, he's quick to note), Wise is among 20 finalists for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year for the Alabama-Georgia-Tennessee region. The winner will be announced next month in Atlanta.

"This is an honor for me," he said. "But it's recognition of the efforts by the people at Intergraph.

"The award recognizes that we've grown from a defensive posture to an offensive posture."

The program also salutes a "personal commitment to their businesses and communities."

And Wise makes sure Intergraph and its employees give back to the community.

"We're mindful of the impact we have to help the community," he said. "We're a global company and helped during the tsunami, the recent floods and tornadoes."

He was touched when speaking of receiving a flag from the Red Cross for the company's support of the organization. In fact, he said, "one of our employees is the chair of the local Red Cross."

Wise spoke Friday after hosting the company's Garden of Hope spring dedication at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. The Garden of Hope was started in 2006 and serves as a sanctuary featuring flowers, trees and shrubs representing honorees' fight against cancer.

"This is one of the most meaningful things we do," he said. "The Garden of Hope is much more than just a beautiful flower garden - it is a display of unity against this terrible disease that touches all of us."

Budd McLaughlin can be reached at [budd.mclaughlin@htimes.com](mailto:budd.mclaughlin@htimes.com) and 532-4527.