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## The Biz: An inside look at bay area business newsmakers

By Times staff writer  
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Bubba the Love Sponge Clem has helped make WHPT-FM 102.5 "The Bone" No. 1 in the Tampa Bay market among adults 25 to 54, and Bubba's morning drive-time show is No. 1 in its time slot with a 12.5 share.



Radio station operator Cox Radio Inc. saw its third-quarter profit fall 21 percent on declining revenue and softening economic conditions — including the Tampa Bay radio market. But that doesn't mean the Atlanta-based company's chief is not happy with the local station — WHPT-FM 102.5 "the Bone" — and this year's return of Bubba the Love Sponge Clem. Cox chief executive Robert Neil, in discussions with Wall Street analysts last week, singled out Bubba. "In Tampa, WHPT is now the No. 1 station in the market with a share of adults 25 to 54, and in morning drive with Bubba the Love Sponge, the station is No. 1 with a 12.5 share," Neil said. Now Neil is leveraging Bubba's appeal with a push to rev up the struggling Jacksonville market. Bubba already is broadcast there, but Cox has hired legendary radio bad-boy Doug "Greaseman" Tracht to work Jacksonville during afternoon drive time. Those familiar with Bubba's off-color style will understand the Greaseman's method of risque storytelling. Tracht's career collapsed in the late 1990s after he delivered an on-air joke about the gruesome, racially motivated murder of a black man in Texas. Tracht apologized but was fired immediately from WARW in Washington, D.C. He went more than two years without a job in radio. After making amends by appearing before black groups and going on Tavis Smiley's show on BET, Tracht's career slowly revived. Cox operates 86 radio stations in 19 markets.

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