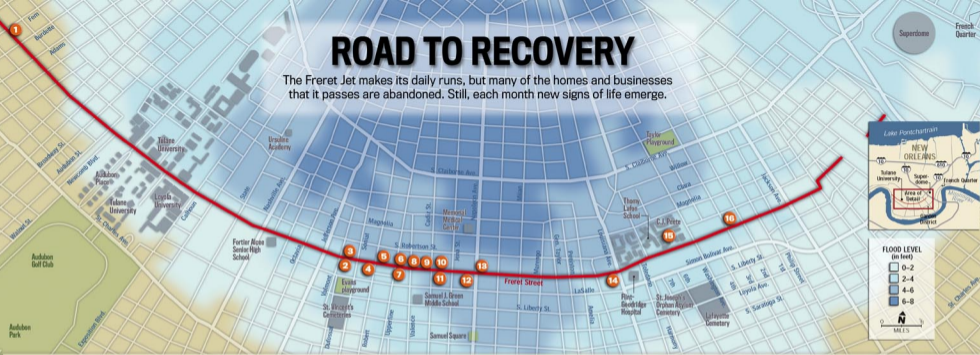


ROAD TO RECOVERY

The Freret Jet makes its daily runs, but many of the homes and businesses that it passes are abandoned. Still, each month new signs of life emerge.



1. KEIFFER HOME

Sarah and David Keiffer returned from Baton Rouge last month to their un-flooded home so their daughters could attend their recently reopened school.

2. FRIAR TUCK'S

Jason Blitch maked out his credit cards to fix up his flooded business, a local bar popular with students from Loyola and Tulane universities.

3. FRERET HARDWARE

Rick Torres reopened his family's flooded hardware store (circa 1938), in October—with an assist from church members to clean and ring up sales.

4. KEHOE AUTOMOTIVE CO.

Thomas Alexander's shop was robbed of all of its tools, but he reopened in October. Lack of manpower has forced him to turn away some business.

5. DUNBAR'S CREOLE COOKING

A neighborhood gem since 1965, Dunbar's was flooded and is closed. Celestine Dunbar hopes to one day offer her famous fried chicken again.

6. BLUE BLOCK PROJECT

Developer Greg Erssien has cleaned up and rented out all of his storefront space. Coming soon: a coffeehouse, an ice-cream shop, and a tattoo parlor.

7. NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES (NHS)

The community development organization was pleased with progress before the flood. It has relocated for now.

8. BLOOMIN' DEALS

In December, the Junior League thrift store—which was flooded—opened its doors again. It remains a beloved spot for bargain hunters.

9. DENNIS BARBER SHOP

Dennis Sigur's shop was looted and flooded. He refurbished with new barber chairs and hung out his shingle again in December.

10. OLD FRANK'S STEAKHOUSE

Nash Barocca's family restaurant, which he uses as an office, closed decades ago. He talks of selling it in the future.

11. FRERET STREET GYM

Mike Iato hitched a boat ride down Freret just days after Katrina hit to start cleaning out his gym, the first business on the block to open after the storm.

12. OUR LADY OF LOURDES

The Spanish Colonial revival church and school was to celebrate its 100th birthday when the flood hit. The archdiocese has closed the church for now.

13. PAGE HOME

What the flood didn't destroy in Lee Page's home, looters carted away Page, who now lives in Houston, is uncertain whether he will return.

14. ORIGINAL BROWN DERBY

Without flood insurance, Sam Ottalish borrowed money to reopen his corner grocery and began serving his popular soul food again in January.

15. C.J. PEETE

Once known as the Magnolia Projects, the 80-plus-year-old public housing complex remains battered and shuttered, its former residents scattered.

16. PARKER HOME

After a stay at the convention center, Sarah and Peter Parker evacuated to Texas. Sarah and her children returned in December to make the home livable.