

REBUILDING THE GULF COAST: ENTREPRENEURS

Throughout Louisiana and Mississippi, entrepreneurs are rebuilding their communities. In this volume, you will read research that draws on interviews with over 400 people of all walks of life in Louisiana and Mississippi. This research explains *what* entrepreneurship is. It discusses *how* entrepreneurs and their businesses play a critical role in the response to and recovery after disasters. It details *where* and *when* they have played key parts.

In this volume, you will also meet six people who are using entrepreneurship to rebuild their communities. These case studies give the entrepreneurs themselves the opportunity to explain *who* they are and *why* they do what they do.

These six entrepreneurs could not differ more. Two are in New Orleans; three are in Chalmette; and one is in Mississippi. Four are men; two are women. Two are immigrants to the United States. Five had their businesses before Katrina; one discovered his opportunity after the storm. Some have families; some do not. Some are serial entrepreneurs; others have poured their heart and soul into their current work for years, even decades.

These six entrepreneurs could not be more similar. They share a talent for discovering opportunities, a passion for their work, and a love of their communities. They play critical roles in helping their neighborhoods and cities rebound after the most costly natural disaster in American history.

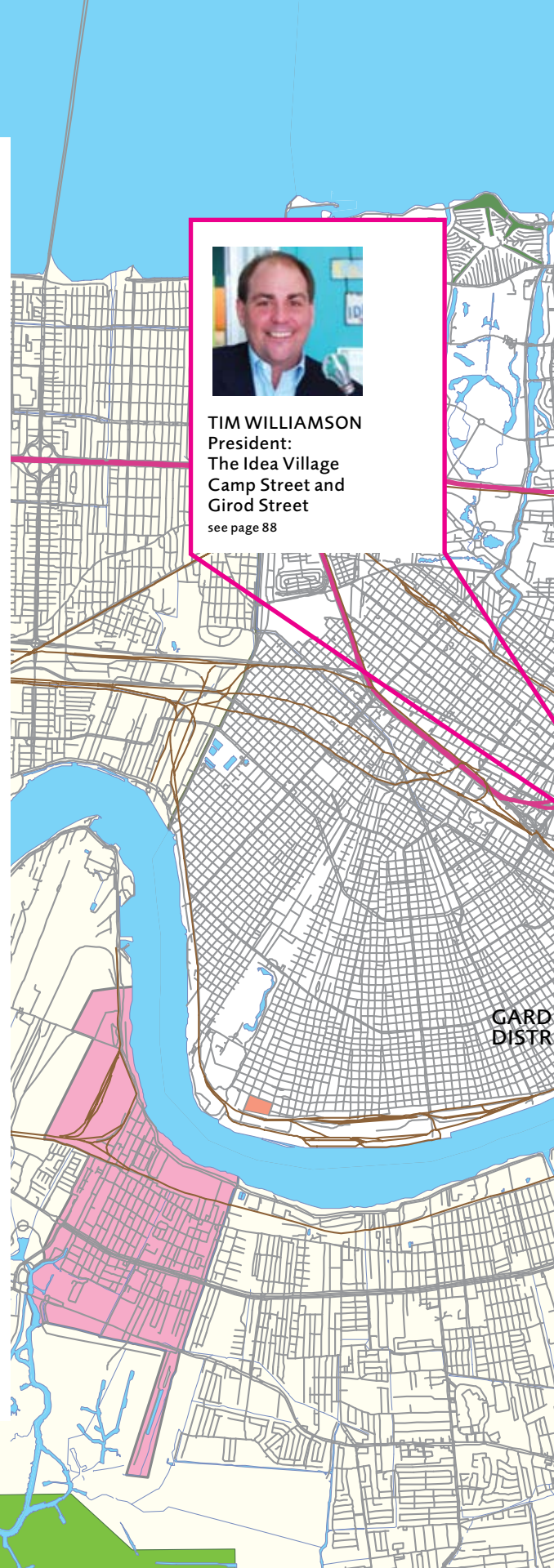
There is no one-size-fits-all plan for disaster recovery. A successful recovery is as unique as the disaster that precipitated it. All disaster recoveries are different.

But one crucial aspect that all successful disaster recoveries share is entrepreneurship, people acting within their communities and local economies to identify and address the needs of their fellow citizens. The entrepreneurs profiled here embody six examples of what is working in post-Katrina recovery and offer insights for fellow entrepreneurs facing other disasters.

Daniel M. Rothschild
Project Director



TIM WILLIAMSON
President:
The Idea Village
Camp Street and
Girod Street
see page 88





CASEY KASIM
Owner: Discount Zone
St. Claude Avenue and
Reynes Street
see page 36



RONDA DEFOREST
Owner: Flour Power
Paris Road and East
Moreau Street
see page 72



BEN CICEK
Owner: Da Parish
Coffee House
Judge Perez Drive
and Paris Road
see page 56

LOWER
NINTH
WARD

FRENCH
QUARTER

ST. BERNARD
PARISH



LUIS COLMENARES
Artist
Jean Lafitte Parkway
see page 100



ALICIA COOL
Owner: Bloomers Flowers
Highway 90, Bay St.
Louis, MS
see page 19