Even when floodwater began to seep under the back door and Sandra Winfrey broke out the mop and towels, she didn't really think her house was at risk.

News reports warned of flooding that Saturday as water crept up her street, then to her house, overflowing a backyard ditch, but a flood in Monticello was unthinkable. Her neighborhood isn't in a flood zone, she recalled.

Winfrey, 51, a respiratory therapist and married mother of two college-age children, made a roast for rice and gravy that day, washed her hair and prepared to ride out the rain on the couch catching up on TV.

"I was like, 'I've been here for 28 years; there's no way water's going to come in the house,'" Winfrey said recently.

Eventually it became apparent that, flood zone or not, the Winfreys' house on West Wendover Drive was taking on water, rising eventually to 5 feet. Although she and her family escaped, they returned to a wrecked house and to three waterlogged vehicles they hadn't been able to move in time.

Nearly a year after heavy rains caused floodwaters to inundate thousands of homes across the state, one Baton Rouge street captures the recovery's
The flood in Monticello, a neighborhood in Baton Rouge, left many homes damaged and residents struggling to recover. Marge Mackey, a longtime resident of Monticello, had flood insurance, but it was not enough. Her son, Johnathan, also had insurance, but it was not enough for the repairs. Jacob Winfrey, another resident, lost his home and had to file for bankruptcy. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) provided assistance, but the process was slow and complicated. Residents were still waiting for assistance months after the flood. The flood also highlighted the importance of having adequate insurance and the need for better disaster preparedness. The story of Monticello and other neighborhoods in Baton Rouge serves as a lesson in the importance of preparedness and the need for stronger federal aid in natural disasters.
Homes and trailers line West Wendover Drive in Baton Rouge.

Recovery

Continued from page 6A

a nail on them. Keylonda Wheeler recalled filling out the application for disaster food stamps, which has a line for telling an address. But the Wheelers weren't staying at the house at the moment. "So you're homeless?" an attendant asked.

"I have a house; it's just messed up!" Keylonda Wheeler recalled thinking as she teared up. While several residents on West Wendover shared in tough experiences, key FEMA with helping them return home. Real Ger-

"I had a very positive expe-

"That's why I'm like, 'No, it can't be happening again,'" said Lee, a bank manager. "I can't.

Lee, 31, had to rebuild with

Theresa Carter speaks about her home's recovery from the floods.

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FLAKE REMOVES YOUR PERSONALIZED BRICKS

"At least we're not in the middle of the block; a good floor plan and a yard. Real estate agent Jeremy Henderson, who has bought a few gutted homes in Monticello and flipped them, rebuilt the Alexander's home. He remotes bullshit on the neighborhood where the house family.

"I feel like the homeowners are coming back. They are coming back," said Lee. But some on West Wendover said they worry they could see the early years of marriage and settling into their first home. Among them, "meant to describe their com-

"We felt like that if any time a..." Lee also has a house nearby. "He just opened his home to us," Lee remembered. Lee also has been working with her church, New Galilee Baptist, to deliver aid to flood victims.

"We are a Christian people, and we're helping a lot," she said. Lee has family came to Baton Rouge from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Lee, who got 8 feet of water in her New Orleans home in Gentilly, had flood insurance for years in Baton Rouge. Her agent and neighbors always wondered why she'd ever won it, and she canceled it only months before the flood struck.

"That's why I'm like, 'No, it can't be happening again,'" said Lee, a bank manager. "I can't.

Lee, 31, had to rebuild with

Typo error on page 6A