By Jim Knowles

San Leandro Times

Emil Villa's Hickory Pit will be closed for a while after more than the meat got smoked on Sunday morning.

A grease fire started under the grill at the restaurant at 1800 East 14th St. just before 7 a.m. Alameda County firefighters extinguished the blaze, which took about 40 minutes as the fire had gotten into the wall behind the grill, according to Battalion Chief Ron Figuera of the Alameda Country Fire Department.

There were no injuries.

The fire began in the pans underneath the grill that catch grease. The restaurant filled with smoke but there is not a cost estimate on the damage yet, Figuera said.

Sixteen firefighters and a battalion chief arrived at the restaurant in five vehicles — three engines, one truck, and a rescue truck.

The restaurant's owner couldn't be reached this week for comment.

The cooking equipment that was damaged by the fire will need to be replaced for the restaurant

to reopen.

There was damage to the grill, the vent and the roof of the restaurant, according to a report by the Alameda County Environmental Health Department, which inspects all restaurants after a fire.

"This is a typical type of fire for a restaurant," said Alameda County Health Dept. supervisor Cynthia Bartus.

After a fire, a restaurant submits its plans for repair to the county. After the county approves the plans, the repairs are made and then the county inspects the work before allowing the restaurant to open again, Bartus said.

CAPTION: Emil Villa's will be temporarily closed until the fire damage is repaired.

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