

TOP STORY

# Friesenhaus fire might have started with cigarette

By Sara Samora | The Herald-Zeitung Aug 24, 2019

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Bystanders react to the fire at Friesenhaus on Friday, Aug. 23, 2019. MIKALA COMPTON | He  
Mikala Compton

The fire that destroyed Friesenhaus restaurant on Friday evening may have been caused by a careless cigarette, fire officials said Saturday.

The New Braunfels fire marshals returned to the scene on Saturday as part of the investigation into the blaze that ripped through the structure the day before, and which New Braunfels firefighters battled for several hours.

According to Battalion Chief Ethan Lindner, investigators observed fire intensity and movement patterns consistent with an exterior fire that appeared to have started on, or near the wood privacy fence that divided the property for Taqueria El Charro.

“Due to wind conditions and the location of additional fuel load located on the exterior of the structure, the fire quickly spread to the structure via a wooden ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] ramp,” Lindner said.

The ramp was located between the fence and the restaurant, and investigators found the fire moved from the exterior of the building to the attic space.

Lindner also said investigators interviewed witnesses, who said the fire started at the fence line, which then moved toward the restaurant.

They also found cigarette butts and unburnt vegetation along the fence line.

Lindner said that, along with the ramp, gave weight to the theory of an improperly discarded cigarette.

“Investigators secured a sample of fire debris near the base of the ADA ramp in order to further prove or disprove their theory,” Lindner said. “Additional witnesses are still being located and contacted.”

The building is a total loss, but the cost is unknown.

“It would be the difference between what the owners of the Friesenhaus were insured for versus the cost to rebuild,” he said.

For now, the scene has been secured for the owner’s insurance company to follow-up with a private investigation.

Lindner said that one person was transported to a nearby hospital for smoke inhalation.



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## Friesenhaus Fire

Robert Martin Aug 23, 2019



NBFD battles Friesenhaus blaze



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