



MIKE LUCIA — Staff

STORE OWNER JEFF FINGERUT (right) surveys the damage after a fire destroyed the 60-year-old, family-owned West Coast Sporting Goods store Friday night in San Leandro.

Four-alarm fire destroys old San Leandro sports store

By Aaron Morrison

STAFF WRITER

A four-alarm fire destroyed a longtime San Leandro store, West Coast Sporting Goods, which was categorized as a total loss, fire officials said Saturday.

Despite the fire, the store will continue to do business from its warehouse in San Leandro, store owner Jeff Fingerut said.

At about 11:05 p.m. Friday night, firefighters responded to calls of a fire in the 5,000-square-foot, single-story commercial building at 13720 East 14th St. in San Leandro.

The flames and smoke, which could be seen from afar throughout San Leandro, were reportedly as high as three stories. Due to a heavy fire load and the building's proximity to other commercial and residential buildings, 90 firefighters were called to assist in containing the blaze. It was extinguished in an hour and a half, Aisha Knowles, an Alameda

County fire official, said.

The cause of the fire was still unknown and will not be investigated until Monday, Knowles said.

There were no injuries reported.

San Leandro Police evacuated two apartment buildings adjacent to the sporting goods store. Of the 150 residents evacuated from Casa Camelias, an apartment complex at 13730 East 14th St., and an apartment building behind the store, 12 residents were unable to return to their homes due to minor damage, Knowles said.

The American Red Cross found temporary housing for those displaced by the fire.

Minor damage to those buildings included broken windows, scorched curtains and smoke and water damage.

Fingerut, his wife Allison and their son Steven surveyed the store's damage from the roof of an adjacent commercial com-

plex Saturday morning.

"We've got to call the company," Jeff Fingerut said, pointing down to a shelf of baseballs that appeared to be undamaged. "Pro Nines don't burn."

He also pointed to an area where he said 30 racks of 5,000 bats used to be.

The store will not shut down and will continue to operate from its warehouse at 1855 Alvarado St. in San Leandro, Fingerut said.

"Calls made to the store's number will be transferred to the warehouse by next week," he said.

West Coast Sporting Goods, established in 1948, specializes in baseball equipment, as well as other general sporting goods merchandise. It has supplied many Northern California sports teams with equipment.

The store's warehouse can be reached at 510-357-8149 or 510-895-1834.