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Below is an article in the local Stockton Record Newspaper regarding Habit Burger, Stockton facility.

Chomping down on pollution

By [Alex Breitler](#)

Stockton Record, Friday, Jan. 1, 2016

One of Stockton's newest burger joints was so popular after it opened two years ago that the public complained about the thick fumes that periodically wafted from a rooftop vent into the surrounding neighborhood.

"Sometimes the place looks like its on fire," one observer told The Record last year.

The good news is that The Habit on March Lane is experimenting with new technology that could take a bite out of its rush-hour pollution problem.

The restaurant was the first in the San Joaquin Valley to sign up for a new pilot program aimed at reducing emissions from restaurants with charbroil grills.

Cooking meat contributes to the Valley's notoriously bad air. Microscopic specks of grease escape into the air while the meat sizzles away on the grill; those tiny specks add to dangerous particle pollution in nearby neighborhoods, just like chimney smoke does.

As of 2009, nearly 2,500 commercial char broilers in the Valley were serving up more than 75,000 tons of meat each year, spewing more than 900 tons of pollution, according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

More than a decade ago, Valley air regulators began requiring restaurants with chain-driven char broilers — think most fast-food restaurants — to slash emissions.

But restaurants such as The Habit, those with under-fired char broilers rather than the chain-driven ones, were not subject to the same rules because the technology didn't exist for those kinds of grills.

After a few more years of research, that's starting to change. Earlier this year the air district agreed to set aside \$750,000 to test some new control technologies for under-fired char broilers in Valley restaurants.

In September, the air district invested \$171,044 in a new scrubber and filtration system at The Habit. For its part, the restaurant must evaluate how well the controls work and submit reports to the air district.

Officials hope to fund at least three to five of these test projects across the Valley. They may then expand the existing rules to the under-fired char broilers by 2017.

K.G. Suh of Stockton called The Record to express his concern about The Habit in 2014. He said at the time that he had to roll up his car window every time he drove by the business on March Lane, and expressed concern about the environmental impacts of the exhaust from the restaurant.

This week, Suh said that he was glad improvements had been made.

"I've seen the difference," Suh said. "I think (the pollution) is quite a bit reduced. It's great."

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