

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Enough signatures were gathered on a recent petition to put the issue of forming a hospital district on the spring election ballot in Chase County.

County Clerk Debbie Clark said last week that she verified 373 valid signatures on the petition, turned in several weeks ago. There had been 430 signatures on the petition.

The issue needed 223 signatures, or 10 percent of the 2,234 resident freeholders in Chase County. A resident freeholder is a person residing in Chase County who owns property. That excludes businesses and corporations, Clark said.

The hospital district issue was raised by a group of citizens led by Sue Kinner, a former Chase County Community Hospital board member.

She and others wanted to see the hospital board elected by the public, rather than appointed by the commissioners, as has been the case in the past.

If the voters approve a hospital district in the May election, board members will be established as follows:

Members of the first board are appointed by the county commissioners. Two serve until the first Tuesday in June following the first primary election following the appointment.

Three serve until the first Tuesday in June following the second primary election following the appointment.

After election of members, any vacancy on the board other than the expiration of a term shall be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the board.

Members shall be elected from the hospital district at large for terms which begin on the first Tuesday in June following their election. Each member shall serve for a term of four years.

Members shall be elected on the nonpartisan ballot.

Clark said the commissioners will be setting a hearing date soon for anyone who wants to submit a proposal to opt into or out of the proposed district.