

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

After a 3-0 vote by the Chase County Commissioners last week, the three sirens in town will only go off at noon.

No one knows exactly when the practice started, but the sirens have been sounding at 7 a.m., 12 noon and 6 p.m. for many years.

It has been surmised that the times were originally set to remind people of work, lunch and dinnertime.

Recently, a number of people have been questioning the reason for the thrice-a-day sounding. County Commissioner Jodi Thompson said she was approached by several people, and put the item on the agenda for last week's meeting.

Thompson said the county runs the communication center, pays the dispatchers who blow the siren and purchased two of the new sirens, which she noted are louder than the old ones.

The city and county split the cost of a third siren 50-50.

Sirens are also sounded at Enders Reservoir, but only to alert campers of high winds and storms, and at the town of Enders, where two are blown only for storms.

A siren in Champion has blown at noon "forever," Thompson added.

County Clerk Debbie Clark said the new policy will give the public a chance to decide how they feel about less noise during the day.

Thompson said limiting the sirens won't affect testing of them.

Imperial City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland said it had been unclear in the past as to who is in charge of the sirens.

After the commissioners' vote last week, she said, "They owned the largest part of the whistle and they're in charge" of the decisions.