

Maduro vows to punish opponents for sanctions

By **FABIOLA SANCHEZ**
and **JOSHUA GOODMAN**
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro vowed Friday to prosecute for treason opponents he accused of being behind sweeping U.S. financial sanctions that will strain relations between the countries and make it harder for the socialist leader to raise badly needed cash.

Maduro accused President Donald Trump of trampling on international law and relations with Latin America by taking actions that he said would cause “great damage” to the Venezuelan oil economy as well as American investors who own the country’s bonds.

He singled out the president of Venezuela’s congress, Julio Borges, as being the “mastermind” of the financial and economic “blockade” and called on the government-stacked supreme court and a new, all-powerful constitutional assembly to initiate proceedings against opponents who have lobbied in favor of the sanctions.

“You’ve got to be a big traitor to your country to ask for sanctions against Venezuela,” Maduro said in a televised appearance.

The sanctions, which Trump signed by executive order, prohibit American financial institutions from providing new money to the government or the state oil company, PDVSA. They also ban trading in two bonds the



Militia members shouts slogans during a speech by Gen. Carlos Leal Telleria, Commander of the Venezuelan Bolivarian Militia, in Fort Tiuna, Caracas, Venezuela, Friday.

government recently issued to circumvent its increasing isolation from Western financial markets.

They also restrict the Venezuelan oil giant’s U.S. subsidiary, Citgo, from sending dividends back to Venezuela — a move that Maduro said would lead

to the “virtual closure” of a company responsible for thousands of American jobs.

“They’re committing robbery, fraud,” Maduro said, adding that Venezuela would reach out to its U.S. partners to make sure decades of business relationships aren’t broken. If necessary

the government would find new markets for the roughly 700,000 barrels of oil it sends daily to the U.S., he said.

Trump officials stressed that by leaving untouched crude shipments between the United States and Venezuela the sanctions were targeting Maduro and his allies, not the Venezuelan people.

“Maduro may no longer take advantage of the American financial system to facilitate the wholesale looting of the Venezuelan economy at the expense of the Venezuelan people,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said at the White House. “These measures will undermine Maduro’s ability to pay off political cronies, and regime supporters, and increase pressure on the regime to abandon it’s disastrous path.”

A senior Trump administration official said additional sanctions would be imposed if Maduro doesn’t reverse course and meet opposition demands that he roll back plans to rewrite the constitution, free dozens of political prisoners, and hold fair and transparent elections.

In a conference call to brief reporters on the measures, the official said the United States has significant influence over Venezuela’s economy but does not want to wield it in an irresponsible manner that could further burden the already struggling Venezuelan people. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the measures in greater detail.

Test drive event to help Hermiston choir

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
East Oregonian

The Hermiston High School choir will benefit from a promotion sponsored by the Ford Motor Company.

Nick Kennedy, chief operations officer at Tom Denchel Ford Country, said up to \$6,000 can be raised in less than a full day’s work during this weekend’s Drive 4 UR School event.

“Each time we’ve had one in Hermiston, we’ve exceeded Ford Motor Company’s goal,” he said. “We max out every year with donations in a short five to six hours.”

The fundraising event is simple, Kennedy said. For each qualified driver that takes a short test drive, Ford Motor Company will donate \$20 (up to \$6,000). The choir is raising money for a spring break trip to Disneyland.

Drive 4 UR School is Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the parking lot at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St. To avoid waiting, people can register in advance by calling 541-567-3291.

Also, walk-ins are welcome. Students and other volunteers will be available to watch kids while parents take a test drive, said Maria Duron, Hermiston School District communications officer and community

relations specialist.

Kennedy said participants won’t experience high-pressured salesmen pushing for people to purchase a new car. Those taking test drives will be accompanied by teachers, advisors, parents of choir students or other volunteers. However, if people want to drive away in a new car, they will have an opportunity.

“We will have a representative on site if people have questions,” Kennedy said.

While in California, Duron said the choir will perform in Disneyland’s Magic Music Days. In addition, students will have an opportunity to work with Disney professionals.

“Some of these activities probably wouldn’t be possible if it wasn’t for the support of organizations like the Ford company,” Duron said. “They are one of many organizations in the community that support our schools.”

The Ford Motor Company started the Drive 4 UR School program in 2007 as a way to give back to communities across the country. Kennedy said because of the program’s popularity dealerships are typically limited to sponsoring two events per year. Also, he said the local company’s president strongly promotes the program.

BRIEFLY

Heppner chamber luncheon presents overview

HEPPNER — The upcoming Heppner Chamber of Commerce meeting features an all entities report.

The no-host luncheon is Thursday, Sept. 7 at noon at Heppner City Hall, 111 N. Main St. The meal, which costs \$10, is catered by Gateway Café and features chicken Alfredo pasta, fresh garden salad, dinner rolls and a cookie.

To ensure there’s enough space and food, those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by Friday, Sept. 1 by contacting 541-676-5536 or heppnerchamber@centurytel.net.

Umatilla County library district hires new director

PENDLETON — Erin McCusker was recently hired as the new director of the Umatilla County Special Library District.

McCusker has extensive experience in a variety of library service fields. Starting her library career in 1992, McCusker spent 11 years in the Boise Basin Library District, becoming its director in 1997. She then became the library consultant for the Idaho Commission for Libraries in Boise.

She then moved to Flagstaff, Arizona, when her husband was transferred with the U.S. Forest Service. There, McCusker worked at the Flagstaff City-Coconino County Public Library as an adult and youth services librarian for a year before becoming a branch supervisor.

The Umatilla County Special Library District board views McCusker’s varied background as an asset in working collaboratively with the independent libraries in the district. McCusker has

worked in Pendleton for a private firm in records management for the past three years. She is happy to be back in libraries serving the public.

Formed in 1986, the library district is an independent taxing district funded by taxpayer dollars. Its mission is to support the development of public libraries in Umatilla County to provide services, programs and continuing educational opportunities to individuals of all ages. For more information, visit www.ucslid.org.

Two-day conference highlights workplace safety

BEND — A two-day conference focuses on safe and healthy workplaces, including a keynote address by an electrician who survived being electrocuted by a 12,500-volt, 200-amp overhead power line.

Oregon’s Occupational Safety and Health Division is partnering with several agencies to present such topics as identifying workplace hazards and making safety committees more effective to implementing a hearing conservation program and exploring fundamentals of fall protection.

Gary Norland’s opening keynote speech “The Impact of an Injury: What are You Risking?” is Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 11:30 a.m. The conference is Sept. 19-20 at Riverhouse on the Deschutes in Bend.

Registration is \$145 or one day for \$100. For more information or to register, visit <https://safetyseries.cvent.com/central17>. For questions, call 503-947-7411.

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