

Commercial & Facilities

Fire Protection · Paving · Facilities Services · Security Systems · Elevator · Venue & Catering

Six trades, one publication. Every item is something that moves a number on your P&L, changes what you must do by law, or changes what parts and labor cost you.

IN THIS ISSUE	FIRE PROTECTION NFPA 25's 2026 edition makes a frozen sprinkler system an impairment, requires fire department notification on every impairment, and sets 30- and 90-day correction windows.	PAVING Missouri's posted asphalt cement price slipped to \$627.50 for September 2026 from \$631.25 in August, the first monthly decline since February and still 29.0% above January.	FACILITIES SERVICES OSHA's heat enforcement program lapsed on April 8 and the heat standard has slipped to a supplemental proposal in December 2026, with the emergency response rule targeted for April 2027.	 Read it online This issue, and every one before it
	SECURITY SYSTEMS The FCC's Third Report and Order, adopted July 23, bars equipment authorization for devices containing Covered List logic-bearing components and sets FCC ID display deadlines at 180 and 270 days.	ELEVATOR Michigan is rewriting its elevator licensing rules to restate base fees at \$175 for an annual inspection and \$300 for a device installation permit, with up to 3% annual increases allowed.	VENUE & CATERING USDA cut its 2026 food forecasts on September 25: all food to 2.9%, restaurant meals to 3.5% and groceries to 2.4%, and published its first full 2027 outlook.	
	BACKGROUND SIGNAL The fraud that reads your invoices before it sends one			

TRADE

Cintas lifted its fiscal 2027 revenue outlook to \$12.15-\$12.27 billion on September 23 and expects its FTC-reviewed UniFirst purchase to close before the end of 2026.

Cintas reported first-quarter fiscal 2027 revenue of \$3.01 billion on September 23, up 10.9% from \$2.72 billion a year earlier, with organic growth of 8.9% and gross margin up 120 basis points to 51.5%. It raised its full-year revenue outlook to \$12.15 billion-\$12.27 billion from \$12.10 billion-\$12.25 billion. The release does not break out fire protection revenue.

Summaries of the earnings call put Fire Protection Services organic growth at 9.2% and First Aid and Safety at 14.2%; the release shows First Aid and Safety revenue of \$388.5 million, up 16.1%. Management said it keeps adding specialized technicians, leadership capacity and new locations in fire protection, and the summaries name Charlotte and Nashville among the markets it is entering.

Per the call summaries, management said pricing was consistent with prior years and growth was volume-driven, with more than two-thirds of new sales coming from businesses that had managed their own facility needs. Those are the same

prospects a local fire inspection, extinguisher or facility-services contractor is chasing, and a national firm is now hiring technicians to reach them.

Cintas also said the FTC is still reviewing its purchase of UniFirst and that it expects to close before the end of calendar 2026. The release notes \$14.4 million of transaction expenses, and the call summaries say guidance excludes the deal. Accounts UniFirst holds would move to Cintas on closing.

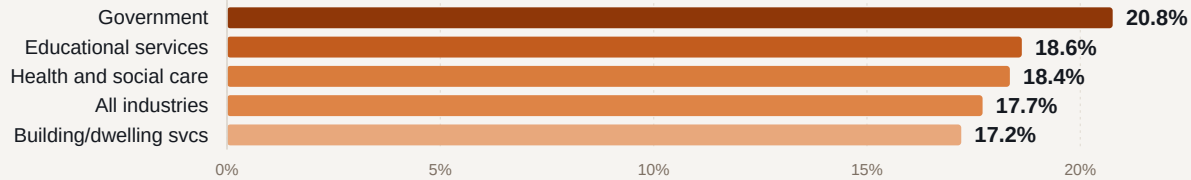
What to do about it: Pull your ten largest fire-protection and facility-services accounts and list each renewal date in the next 12 months. Before each renewal, call the buyer and ask in writing whether a national provider has quoted, then offer a multi-year term with a price-hold letter rather than waiting for a competing bid. Compare your technician pay and open positions with what a national firm is adding, and settle retention terms before year-end. If you buy uniforms or mats from UniFirst, ask it in writing for its assignment and change-of-control terms now.

Cintas fiscal 2027 first-quarter results (Sept. 23) · Cintas investor relations: financial reports · BigGo Finance: Cintas call summary (Sept. 23)

INFOGRAPHIC 1 / JANITORIAL PAY

Janitorial work pays \$17.21 an hour in building-services firms, \$3.55 less than the same work pays in government.

Median hourly wage, janitorial workers, by employer type, May 2025; BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics as analyzed in a Nassco release published September 28, 2026



Median janitorial pay across all industries is \$17.71 an hour, up 26.7% from \$13.98 in 2020. The building and dwelling services category pays \$17.21, which is 50 cents under that median. Schools and hospitals pay \$1.14 to \$1.42 more, and government \$3.55 more. A cleaner you lose to any of them costs you the difference in recruiting and training, so the wage gap is a retention problem. [Nassco / PR Newswire: janitorial wages \(Sept. 28\)](#)

FIRE PROTECTION

TWO ITEMS

REGULATION

NFPA 25's 2026 edition makes a frozen sprinkler system an impairment, requires fire department notification on every impairment, and sets 30- and 90-day correction windows.

Why it matters: Planned and emergency impairments require notifying the AHJ, the fire department and the alarm monitoring service, and ice in piping is itself an impairment that must be thawed or the pipe replaced. The 2026 edition adds recommended correction timeframes of 30 days for critical deficiencies and 90 days for noncritical ones - the numbers an insurer's expert will quote. Exposed: anyone inspecting or owning water-based systems where the 2026 edition is adopted; adoption varies by jurisdiction. Rewrite your impairment form this week to capture all three notifications and to date-stamp every deficiency.

[IFSA, what changes in NFPA 25, 2026 edition \(Apr 7\)](#) · [QRFS, NFPA 25 2026 edition updates \(June 23\)](#)

MONEY

Corrosion-mitigation equipment, pressure-reducing valves and abandoned systems all pick up new inspection duties in NFPA 25's 2026 edition, adding billable scope and owner cost.

Why it matters: Nitrogen generators, vapor-phase inhibitors and negative-pressure systems must now be inspected and tested to the manufacturer's instructions, and a corrosion-mitigation system found non-functional forces the sprinkler design to be recalculated at lower hydraulic values, which can mean larger pipe or more pumping capacity. Pressure-reducing valves gain a flow test and a range-of-motion test. Abandoned systems must be decommissioned: sprinklers, hose valves, hose and alarm devices removed, control-valve operating elements removed, and pipe marked. Price these as separate line items, and warn the owner about the recalculation risk in writing before you touch a nitrogen unit.

[QRFS, NFPA 25 2026 edition updates \(June 23\)](#)

PAVING

TWO ITEMS

SUPPLY

Missouri's posted asphalt cement price slipped to \$627.50 for September 2026 from \$631.25 in August, the first monthly decline since February and still 29.0% above January.

Why it matters: MoDOT's posted index is what Midwest asphalt escalation clauses key off; it fell \$3.75 after seven months of increases. At \$627.50 it is still 29.0% above the \$486.25 posted in January 2026, so spring bids against a January index carry most of that gap. Exposed: contractors on fixed-price commercial lots, private roadways and HOA work with no escalator; state highway work with a price-adjustment clause is largely insulated. Check every unstarted paving contract signed before April for an asphalt adjustment clause. On the ones that do not, reprice or renegotiate now, and put a 30-day mix-price validity window on new quotes.

[MoDOT, Asphalt Price Index](#)

MONEY

A continuing resolution signed September 2 runs surface transportation and the rest of the government only to December 11, 2026, leaving an estimated \$13.5 billion funding gap.

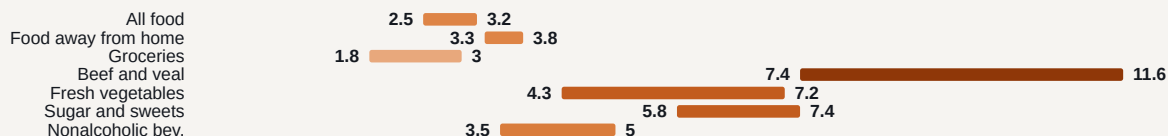
Why it matters: HR 6500, the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2027, holds transportation programs at fiscal 2026 levels but drops the IJA's advance appropriations - transit down about 20% and passenger rail about 83% - and leaves roughly \$13.5 billion of highway and transit programs unfunded. The Senate cleared it 90-6 on August 10, the House 370-48. The replacement, the Build America 250 Act, would authorize \$580 billion for fiscal 2027 through 2031, but is not law. Exposed: subcontractors on federally funded lettings scheduled after December 11. Ask your prime in writing which funding source your work order draws on and add a stop-work and delay-cost clause to anything crossing that date.

[American Infrastructure, transportation stopgap \(Sept 4\)](#) · [Construction Dive, stopgap cuts transportation \(Sept 2\)](#) · [Legis1, federal highway funding vote \(June 3\)](#)

INFOGRAPHIC 2 / FOOD FORECAST BANDS

USDA's 2026 food price forecasts carry wide prediction intervals, widest of all on beef and veal.

Low and high ends of USDA Economic Research Service 2026 prediction intervals, percent change, Food Price Outlook released September 25, 2026.



Beef and veal can land anywhere from 7.4% to 11.6%, a 4.2-point spread on the largest protein line most kitchens buy. The band on restaurant meals, 3.3% to 3.8%, is the tightest here, so menu-price planning is safer ground than food-cost planning. Cost beef features at the top of the band and sides at the midpoint. [Food Price Outlook, Summary Findings](#), [USDA Economic Research Service](#)

REGULATION

OSHA's heat enforcement program lapsed on April 8 and the heat standard has slipped to a supplemental proposal in December 2026, with the emergency response rule targeted for April 2027.

Why it matters: The National Emphasis Program on heat expired April 8, 2026 with no announced renewal, and the permanent standard has stalled since the post-hearing comment period closed October 30, 2025. Labor's plan now shows a supplemental proposed rule in December 2026, and a final Emergency Response standard targeted for April 2027. Exposed: janitorial, grounds, mechanical and building-services employers. The lapse is not amnesty: the General Duty Clause and state plans still support a heat citation. Keep the written heat plan, the water-rest-shade log and the acclimatization schedule in force, and put the December date on next year's budget calendar.

Ogletree, OSHA heat program expires, rule stalls (Apr 8) · EHS Leaders, OSHA heat and emergency rules plans (July 14) · OSHA, Heat Injury and Illness Prevention rulemaking

SECURITY SYSTEMS

REGULATION

The FCC's Third Report and Order, adopted July 23, bars equipment authorization for devices containing Covered List logic-bearing components and sets FCC ID display deadlines at 180 and 270 days.

Why it matters: The measure this paper flagged in Issue 002 was adopted July 23, 2026. A device containing logic-bearing hardware from a Covered List entity - integrated circuits, modules, data-processing hardware - cannot be authorized, and that reaches inside cameras, intercoms, readers and panels with a compliant brand outside. The component prohibition takes effect 30 days after Federal Register publication; Category 1 equipment must display its FCC ID at 180 days, Category 2 at 270, and online marketplaces pick up their own screening duties. Exposed: integrators holding stock and anyone specifying by brand, not model number. Get a model-level authorization letter from each supplier before the next order.

Wiley, FCC Covered List and logic hardware (July 29) · Morgan Lewis, FCC Covered List expansion (Sept 18)

ELEVATOR

MONEY

Michigan is rewriting its elevator licensing rules to restate base fees at \$175 for an annual inspection and \$300 for a device installation permit, with up to 3% annual increases allowed.

Why it matters: Michigan's schedule in force through June 27, 2027 already charges \$190.55 to \$242.05 for annual certificate and inspection fees and \$360.50 to \$535.60 for installation permits, so the draft resets the escalator's base rather than cutting anyone's bill. Draft fees include \$100 for a contractor license and renewal, \$100 for the exam, \$40 for a journeyperson license, \$15 for helper registration and \$250 to appeal. The same rule set reorganizes licenses into Class A unrestricted, Class B repair, maintenance and testing only, and Class C device-specific, with a separate exam for each Class C specialty. Check which class each mechanic needs and book examinations early.

Michigan LARA, Rule Set 2025-53 LR licensing (July 6) · Michigan elevator fee schedule (through June 27, 2027)

SUPPLY

Since April 6 Section 232 duties apply to the full customs value of imported equipment, at 50% for all-metal articles and 25% for derivatives, with a temporary 15% tier for some industrial and electrical gear.

Why it matters: Duty is now assessed on the whole invoice, not metal content, so a pump, cart, enclosure, fixture or rooftop unit once dutied on a fraction of its value is dutied on all of it. Rates run 50% on articles made entirely or almost entirely of steel, aluminum or copper, 25% on moderate-metal derivative articles, 10% where the metal was smelted or cast in the United States, and a temporary 15% on certain industrial and electrical equipment that expires January 1, 2028. Products under 15% metal by weight are excluded. Make every equipment quote state the HTS line, the metal-content basis and whether duty is included - in writing, before you commit to a customer price.

White & Case, Section 232 metals tariff changes (Apr 7) · Green Worldwide, Section 232 full-value tariffs (Apr 2)

SUPPLY

The FCC's Covered List has grown three times in nine months: drones in December 2025, consumer-grade routers in March 2026, and advanced robotic devices and power inverters in July 2026.

Why it matters: Each addition to the list can strand equipment already specified on a job. Hikvision and Dahua have been listed since March 12, 2021, but only for public safety, security of government facilities, physical security surveillance of critical infrastructure and other national security purposes - so the gear still turns up on ordinary commercial installs, and an attestation naming the use case is worth more than one naming the brand. The July 2026 addition of advanced robotic devices pulls patrol and building-service robots into scope. Exposed: anyone quoting a 90-day project off a distributor catalog. Re-verify authorization at order placement, not at bid, and say so in your proposal terms.

Morgan Lewis, FCC Covered List expansion (Sept 18) · FCC, Covered List, Secure Networks Act Section 2

REGULATION

Michigan's companion rule set adopts ASME A17.1-2022, changes periodic testing intervals, and writes in remote monitoring and automated equipment that rides elevators, taking effect 90 days after filing.

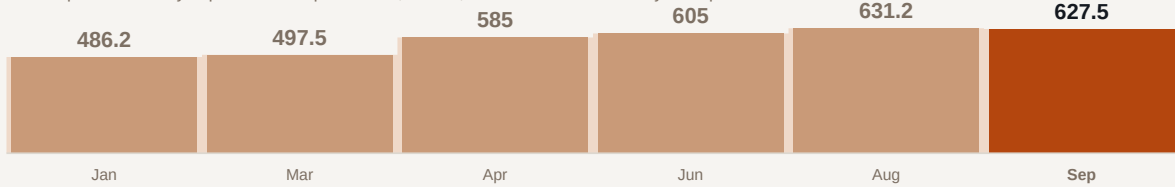
Why it matters: The draft adopts A17.1-2022 along with A17.2-2023, A17.3-2017, A18.1-2023 and A90.1-2023, and alters periodic testing schedules and inspection frequencies - the line items on your maintenance contract. It also adds requirements for remote monitoring and for automated equipment (delivery and cleaning robots) that calls and rides elevators; that is new interface work you should be billing for. ASME has since issued A17.1-2025, which adds emergency responder radio coverage provisions, elastomeric buffer requirements and seismic updates, so a 2022 adoption leaves the state a full edition behind. Ask your service provider in writing which edition your test schedule is priced to.

Michigan LARA, Rule Set 2025-54 LR elevator code (July 7) · ANSI, ASME A17.1-2025 elevator safety code (Feb 23)

INFOGRAPHIC 3 / ASPHALT TURNS

Missouri's posted asphalt cement price fell in September for the first time since February.

MoDOT posted monthly asphalt cement price index, dollars, selected months January to September 2026.



One month down \$3.75 after a \$145 climb from January to August is not a trend. September is still 29.0% above January. Treat the dip as a window to lock mix pricing rather than as relief, and keep escalation language in every contract that runs past the winter shutdown. [Asphalt Price Index](#), Missouri Department of Transportation

MONEY

USDA cut its 2026 food forecasts on September 25: all food to 2.9%, restaurant meals to 3.5% and groceries to 2.4%, and published its first full 2027 outlook.

Why it matters: The September 25 release trimmed every headline number from the August 25 one - all food from 3.0% to 2.9%, food away from home from 3.6% to 3.5%, food at home from 2.5% to 2.4%. Restaurant inflation is still forecast 1.1 points above grocery inflation. USDA also forecasts 2027: all food 2.0%, food away from home 2.6%, food at home 1.8% - but the 2027 intervals are enormous, minus 5.0% to plus 9.2% for groceries. Exposed: anyone about to sign a 2027 catering or banquet contract off a point estimate. Price 2027 from the interval, not the midpoint, or put a commodity reopener in the contract.

USDA ERS, Food Price Outlook (Sept 25, 2026 release) · USDA ERS, Food Price Outlook (Aug 25, 2026 release)

SUPPLY

USDA still forecasts beef and veal up 9.4% for 2026 while eggs fall 29.4%, pork rises 1.2% and poultry 1.0%, a spread of nearly 39 points across the protein case.

Why it matters: September 25 forecasts: beef and veal at 9.4%, with an interval of 7.4% to 11.6%, plus fresh vegetables 5.7%, sugar and sweets 6.6% and nonalcoholic beverages 4.2%, all run above the 2.4% grocery average. Eggs are down 29.4%, pork up 1.2% and poultry up 1.0%. Exposed: steak-forward menus and beef-heavy buffet and banquet packages; breakfast, egg and poultry programs are where the relief sits. Recast your three highest-volume entrees at the new numbers this week and move at least one beef feature to poultry or pork for the fourth quarter. Do not discount the egg saving away - bank it against beef.

USDA ERS, Food Price Outlook (Sept 25, 2026 release)

THE BACKGROUND SIGNAL

The fraud that reads your invoices before it sends one

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center took 24,768 business email compromise reports in 2025, with losses of \$3.05 billion — a record, after dipping to \$2.77 billion in 2024 from \$2.95 billion in 2023. Across all internet crime it logged 1,008,597 complaints and \$20.88 billion in losses. Reported cases only, so read it as a floor.

Business email compromise, not ransomware, is the one that should concern a commercial contractor. Someone gets into a mailbox, reads until they understand how you invoice and who pays you, then sends a real-looking progress billing with different bank details. No malware, no warning — just a payment that never arrives and an argument about who eats it. A trade that emails proposals, work orders and vendor invoices all day is the shape this is built for. The quieter number is adoption: under 20% of firms with fewer than 20 staff use AI at all.

What to do about it: You don't need a security program. You need multi-factor authentication on email and your accounting login, and one rule everybody follows: nobody changes bank details on the strength of an email or a call — you ring the number you already had on file and confirm. That covers most of it, and costs nothing. The part it doesn't — how the systems are set up — is the day job of our parent company, CyberSainya.

FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center, 2025 Internet Crime Report — reported cases only, rounded from \$2,946,830,270, \$2,770,151,146 and \$3,046,598,558. U.S. Census Bureau, Business Trends and Outlook Survey, May 3, 2026.

CYBERSAINYA · CERNOGLOBUS

The Cerno Revenue Engine

Everything the two desks actually do — turning a lead into a booked, paid job. [See it live at cernoglobus.com](#)

Answering now, 24/7100% of calls answeredLive in days, not monthsKeep your own number

1THE REVENUE ENGINE

More leads answered, more jobs booked, more revenue.

EVERY LEAD

Phone call

Inbound text

After-hours

Web / ad

Referral

CERNODESK · FRONT DESK · LIVE

Capture every lead

Answers, qualifies, books — around the clock

Answers every call & text, 24/7

Qualifies & captures the job

Live warm transfer to you

Books onto your calendar

Instant text-back to callers

Custom intake questions

Spam & robocall screening

Call recordings + transcripts

Booking reminders

Review requests

Pushes every lead to your other tools, in real time

Emergency escalation to cell

Bilingual (on request)

Multi-location

Outbound campaigns

Monthly ROI report

"Your front desk never sleeps."

Reception \$209 · Growth \$439 · Full Engine \$899 /mo

CERNO · DEAL DESK · LIVE

Close every deal

Turns the call into a priced quote that books itself

AI drafts the estimate from YOUR price book

Itemized good / better / best options

You approve from your phone

Customer page: options, photos, plain English

Accept → book a time window

Automatic follow-up until booked

Tech photo line (techs text photos in)

Financing & maintenance-plan display

Shared job room (AI, tech, owner, customer)

Works with your stack or standalone

"From first call to booked job."

Deal Desk \$149 · Pro \$249 · Bundle +\$100 /mo

2SEE EVERYTHING — YOUR DASHBOARDS

Read-only, branded, one-key login. Two clean views of the money.

CERNODESK · OWNER DASHBOARD

example view · this month

ANSWERED312

BOOKED88

CAPTURED124

MISSED0

47 calls caught after hours — a 9-to-5 desk would have missed them

CERNO DEAL DESK · OWNER DASHBOARD

example view · this month

OPEN12

AWAITING4

SENT18

WON71

6 min average from request to quote sent · 71% estimate → won

FREE FROM CERNOGLOBUS

Wary of AI? Start where it falls over.

Module 1 of **AI for Business Growth** is free to read — no signup, no card.

What AI is good for in a trade business, and where it breaks. Seven modules, \$149. · [cernoglobus.com/ai-for-business-growth](#)

Questions? Reach out.

Corrections, tips, or something you want covered next.

info@cernoglobus.com



The Revenue Engine
See both desks running, and the pricing



AI for Business Growth
Module 1 free — no signup, no card



Subscribe
Get this brief every other Monday



CernoGlobus
Who publishes this brief, and what we build