

# Home Services

Pest Control · Septic & Sewer · Landscape · Pool · Appliance Repair · Moving

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 | <b>PEST CONTROL</b><br>EPA's August 6, 2026 cancellation order pulls 13 pesticide products entirely and narrows three more, with sell-through running to August 6, 2027. | <b>SEPTIC &amp; SEWER</b><br>Virginia narrowed who may inspect a septic system at a real-estate closing, requiring a licensed operator, installer, or soil evaluator credential.     | <b>LANDSCAPE</b><br>EPA closed comment August 10 on the first-ever residential-turf registration for the herbicide florpyrauxifen-benzyl, covering lawns, sports turf, and golf courses. | <br><b>Read it online</b><br>Every source in here is a live link |
|               | <b>POOL</b><br>PoolCorp's Q2 2026 gross margin slipped 30 basis points to 29.7% on "elevated inbound freight costs," even as net sales rose 2% to \$1.8 billion.         | <b>APPLIANCE REPAIR</b><br>DOE's July 7, 2026 proposal would require new appliance efficiency mandates to clear a 0.3-quad, 30-year energy-savings bar before they can be finalized. | <b>MOVING</b><br>FMCSA's Motus system is replacing the Unified Registration System in 2026, and every for-hire mover will eventually have to re-register through it.                     |                                                                                                                                                     |
|               | <b>BACKGROUND SIGNAL</b><br>The invoice fraud that reads your email first                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                     |

## MONEY · EVERY TRADE IN THIS ISSUE

## BLS's July CPI shows motor fuel up 24.8% over the year while motor vehicle insurance fell 4.5%, its second straight monthly decline, released August 12, 2026.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics released the July 2026 Consumer Price Index on August 12. All items rose 3.4% over the year; core inflation, which strips out food and energy, rose 2.5%. Energy costs are the outlier: the energy index is up 14.7% over twelve months even though it fell 1.5% in July alone. Motor fuel specifically is up 24.8% year over year despite easing 2.2% for the month, and gasoline is up 24.6% year over year while falling 2.9% in July. The direction has turned, but the twelve-month comparison a service business prices against is still running a quarter higher than a year ago.

The number that moves in the opposite direction is motor vehicle insurance: down 4.5% over the year, and down 0.3% for the month after falling 2.0% in June — two consecutive monthly declines in a cost line that has only gone up for most operators in recent memory. The CPI series tracks personal auto policies, not commercial fleet coverage specifically, so a septic truck or moving van policy will not move in lockstep — but personal and commercial auto pricing cycles have historically tracked the same reinsurance and claims-cost swings, with commercial often lagging by a couple of quarters.

Every trade in this issue puts a vehicle on the road daily: pest control routes, septic pump trucks, landscape crews, pool service vans, appliance repair trucks, and moving trucks and trailers. Water, sewer, and trash collection services are up 4.6% over the year and 0.4% for the month. Household furnishings and operations, the bucket that catches a lot of home-repair and maintenance spending, is up only 2.2% over the year and 0.1% for the month — well under the fuel spike, which means an annual price

increase pegged to "inflation" undercharges for fuel and overcharges for everything else.

Fuel also is not one number nationally. EIA's August 10, 2026 weekly survey puts diesel at \$5.044 a gallon on the Gulf Coast and \$6.033 on the West Coast, a spread of nearly a dollar for identical fuel bought a week apart in different regions. A year earlier, the same two regions averaged \$3.397 and \$4.492 — the gap has widened by about 25 cents even as both regions moved up together. A route built across regional boundaries is now pricing a real cost difference, and the same EIA release updates every Monday, so the number an owner is quoting against is never more than a week stale.

**What to do about it:** Get a fresh commercial auto and general-liability quote now — if personal-line insurance is easing for a second straight month, ask your broker in writing whether your renewal reflects that or is still priced off last year's trend. Separate your fuel surcharge from your annual price increase: peg the surcharge to EIA's weekly regional diesel number (published every Monday) and let the annual increase track the 2.2%-4.6% range that household and utility-adjacent services are actually running. If you dispatch across state or regional lines, check the current EIA regional price before routing a multi-stop day. Put the surcharge formula and its trigger point in writing in your service contracts before your fall renewal cycle, so it does not need re-selling to customers every time diesel moves.

BLS — Consumer Price Index Summary, July 2026 (released August 12, 2026) · BLS — Consumer Price Index News Release, full report (PDF), July 2026 · EIA — Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of August 10, 2026

## PEST CONTROL

TWO ITEMS

### REGULATION

EPA's August 6, 2026 cancellation order pulls 13 pesticide products entirely and narrows three more, with sell-through running to August 6, 2027.

**Why it matters:** The order cancels thirteen registrations built on actives including lambda-cyhalothrin, spirotetramat, glyphosate combinations, and staricide, and strips uses from three more: Scholar Fungicide loses pre-harvest melon and post-harvest citrus/tropical fruit uses, Enhance AW loses rye uses, and technical lambda-cyhalothrin loses domestic indoor and outdoor uses. Registrants can sell existing stock through August 6, 2027; amended (not

cancelled) products get an eighteen-month use-up window to February 7, 2028. Product already in the truck is fine to use — buying more of a cancelled formulation after sell-through is a label violation. This week: check your chemical inventory against the thirteen cancelled and three amended registration numbers, and flag stock needing use or return before the August 2027 deadline.

Federal Register — Cancellation Order for Certain Pesticide Registrations and/or Amendments To Terminate Uses (effective August 6, 2026)

## LABOR

States are enforcing EPA's revised applicator-certification standard on their own clocks this year, and missing your state's window means retaking the exam.

**Why it matters:** EPA's applicator-certification rule is rolling out on staggered state timelines through 2026. North Carolina requires anyone certified before July 1, 2025 to watch a one-hour training video and submit a verification form before their certification expires — commercial by June 30, private by September 30 — or retake the exam even with enough recertification credits. Iowa's version, effective January 1, 2026, requires applicators to be at least 18, drops oral exams for private applicators, and no longer counts unproctored online

exams. A technician who assumes last year's credits carry over automatically can lose the ability to legally apply restricted-use product mid-season. This week: check every technician's certification expiration against your state's 2025-2026 transition requirement, not the old renewal calendar — especially anyone whose private-applicator credential expires this September.

NC State Extension — Important Update for NCDA Pesticide License Holders · Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship — Updates to Pesticide Applicator Rules · EPA — Federal Certification Standards for Pesticide Applicators

## SEPTIC &amp; SEWER

TWO ITEMS

## REGULATION

Virginia narrowed who may inspect a septic system at a real-estate closing, requiring a licensed operator, installer, or soil evaluator credential.

**Why it matters:** Two 2026 Acts of Assembly (HB1178 and SB401, chapters 267 and 268) amended Virginia's septic-inspector statute. An authorized inspector must now hold a valid onsite sewage system operator, installer, or soil evaluator license under Title 54.1; "readily accessible" is defined with a 30-inch depth limit; the written contract must document whether the client declined tank pumping; and inspectors are barred from issuing pass/fail grades or claiming to certify system adequacy. The statute carries no effective-date clause, so Virginia's default rule applies — new legislation takes effect July 1 following the session. An inspector using an outdated contract or lacking one of the three named licenses is now out of compliance, and a Class 3 misdemeanor attaches to violations. This week: update your contract to add the tank-pumping disclosure language and confirm every inspector holds one of the three named licenses.

Code of Virginia — Chapter 24.2, Septic System Inspectors (as amended, 2026 cc. 267, 268) · LegiScan — Virginia SB401 (2026 Regular Session)

## MONEY

Water, sewer, and trash collection service prices rose 4.6% over the year through July 2026, outunning the 3.4% all-items CPI.

**Why it matters:** This is a bundled BLS category — municipal water, sewer, and trash billing, not septic pumping specifically — but it's the closest published federal price signal for the wastewater-adjacent services septic and sewer businesses compete against on a customer's bill. A septic company holding pricing flat while this category ran 4.6% is giving up real margin, especially against rising fuel and tipping costs the index doesn't capture. Businesses in the Chesapeake Bay watershed face an added layer: enhanced denitrification systems required for nitrogen reduction on new installations there run measurably higher than a standard system, a gap tied to permit requirements, not the CPI print. This week: compare your last price-list update against the 4.6% figure and, if you serve Bay-watershed properties, confirm enhanced-system quotes reflect current component costs.

BLS — Consumer Price Index Summary, July 2026 (released August 12, 2026) · BLS — Consumer Price Index News Release, full report (PDF), July 2026

## LANDSCAPE

TWO ITEMS

## REGULATION

EPA closed comment August 10 on the first-ever residential-turf registration for the herbicide florpyrauxifen-benzyl, covering lawns, sports turf, and golf courses.

**Why it matters:** EPA's comment window (docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2022-0646, closed August 10) covered Corteva Agriscience's proposal to approve the first residential use of florpyrauxifen-benzyl, an herbicide previously limited to other use patterns. The proposed uses reach residential turf, commercial sports and athletic turf, golf courses, sod farms, and ornamental turfgrass — the core account list for a lawn-care or landscape business. If EPA finalizes it, it becomes a new tool for broadleaf and grass-weed control on exactly these properties; if a drift complaint arises later, the label conditions are the reference point, not the applicator's judgment. First-time residential uses draw scrutiny from environmental commenters, so a final decision on schedule isn't guaranteed. This week: check whether your herbicide suppliers carry florpyrauxifen-benzyl and, if finalized this fall, read the residential-turf label restrictions before it goes in a spray truck.

EPA — Proposed or New Rules, Policies, and Guidance Affecting Agriculture (florpyrauxifen-benzyl first residential use posting)

## LABOR

The standard H-2B cap for April-through-September starts was exhausted March 10, 2026, but a third supplemental allocation stays open to file until September 15.

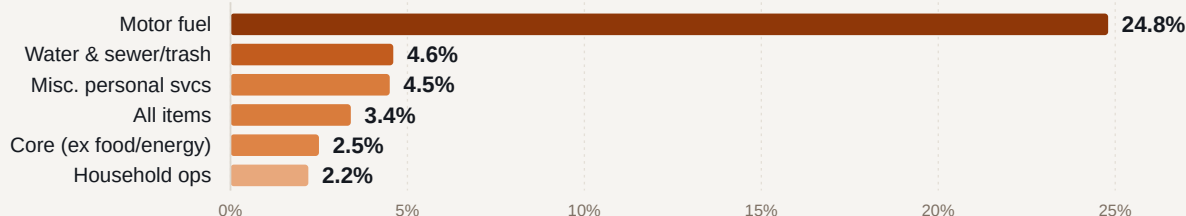
**Why it matters:** USCIS hit the 33,000-visa standard cap for the second half of fiscal 2026 on March 10 and began rejecting petitions for April 1-September 30 starts. Supplemental visas followed: a second allocation of 27,736 opened March 25 with an April 23 deadline, and a third allocation of 18,490 opened April 24 with a filing deadline of September 15 — now four weeks out. Landscape companies that lost the standard-cap lottery or filed late still have a live path to seasonal crew through the third allocation, but only for qualifying workers filed before that date. Missing it means running the season short-handed or paying overtime and subcontractor premiums to cover the gap. This week: confirm with your immigration counsel whether pending H-2B petitions qualify for the third allocation, and file before September 15 — after that, the only path back is next fiscal year's cap.

Fragomen — H-2B Cap Reached for Second Half of FY 2026; Supplemental Visas Remain Available

## INFOGRAPHIC 1 / WHAT'S DRIVING COSTS

## Fuel prices are still running far ahead of every other cost category home-service businesses track.

12-month percent change by CPI category, U.S. city average, not seasonally adjusted, July 2026; BLS, released August 12, 2026



Motor fuel is up nearly five times faster than the all-items rate and ten times faster than household operations. That gap is why a price increase tied to "inflation" alone leaves a fuel-heavy route underpriced. Water/sewer/trash and misc. personal services — closest to what home trades sell — both run under half the fuel rate. Separate your fuel surcharge from your base-price increase; they move at different speeds. Source: BLS — Consumer Price Index Summary, July 2026 (released August 12, 2026)

MONEY

PoolCorp's Q2 2026 gross margin slipped 30 basis points to 29.7% on "elevated inbound freight costs," even as net sales rose 2% to \$1.8 billion.

**Why it matters:** Pool Corporation reported Q2 2026 results July 23: net sales up 2% to \$1.8 billion on steady maintenance demand and momentum in building materials, while gross margin fell 30 basis points, from 30.0% to 29.7%, attributed to elevated inbound freight costs. PoolCorp is the largest wholesale distributor most independent pool service and repair businesses buy chemicals and equipment through, so a margin squeeze there typically shows up as a wholesale price increase downstream within a quarter or two, not as an absorbed cost. The company held its annual earnings guidance despite the pressure, signaling it expects to manage the freight increase through pricing rather than a demand pullback. This week: ask your distributor rep directly whether a price-list update is coming this quarter, and build a standing quarterly pricing review.

GlobeNewswire — Pool Corporation Reports Second Quarter Results; Confirms Annual Earnings Guidance Range, Excluding CEO Transition Costs

SUPPLY

The pool industry's own trade group still lists 50% tariffs on imported steel and aluminum pump, compressor, and valve components as active cost pressure.

**Why it matters:** The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance's federal tariff tracker, current as retrieved this week, still lists a 50% duty on steel and aluminum "derivative" products that explicitly include pumps, compressors, transformers, valves, fittings, and pipes and tubes, plus a separate 50% duty on copper derivatives such as pipe fittings, cables, and connectors. A 10% baseline tariff and country-specific reciprocal tariffs of roughly 10% to 41% layer on top, depending on where a component is manufactured. PHTA's position is that uncertainty over which rate applies to which product is a bigger problem than any single rate, since it disrupts bidding and equipment-replacement budgeting months out. None of this is new this month, but every filter, pump, or heater replacement quoted this season prices against it. This week: get a written, itemized quote that separates tariff cost from base equipment cost, so a customer sees the tariff line, not a flat markup.

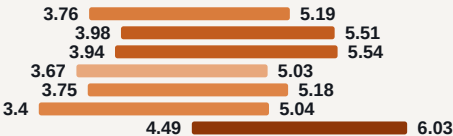
Pool & Hot Tub Alliance — Tariff Policy

INFOGRAPHIC 2 / DIESEL BY REGION

Diesel costs a dollar more per gallon on the West Coast than the Gulf Coast, and the regional gap has widened over the past year.

U.S. on-highway diesel, dollars/gallon: low = week of 8/11/25, high = week of 8/10/26, by PADD region; EIA weekly survey

East Coast  
New England  
Central Atlantic  
Lower Atlantic  
Midwest  
Gulf Coast  
West Coast



Every region is up roughly \$1.40-\$1.55 a gallon over the past year, but the dollars land differently: Gulf Coast diesel is \$5.044 while West Coast is \$6.033, a 99-cent spread the same week. A route crossing these lines prices several fuel costs, not one. The increase has been proportionally similar everywhere, so a national surcharge percentage beats a flat per-gallon add-on. Source: [EIA — Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of August 10, 2026](#)

APPLIANCE REPAIR

REGULATION

DOE's July 7, 2026 proposal would require new appliance efficiency mandates to clear a 0.3-quad, 30-year energy-savings bar before they can be finalized.

**Why it matters:** DOE's proposed rule would make parts of its existing "Process Rule" binding rather than advisory, reinstate a formal "significant energy savings" threshold, and require DOE to weigh costs and benefits across candidate standard levels before adopting one. The threshold is savings of 0.3 quadrillion Btu of full-fuel-cycle energy over 30 years, plus a percentage-improvement test; comments closed around August 6. A companion request for information, comments due September 8, separately reviews how DOE models trade-offs between energy savings and features like wash performance or cycle time. Neither document changes an existing standard for refrigerators, dishwashers, washers, or dryers today, but both raise the bar for finalizing a new one — and tighter mandates historically shorten appliance service life and parts compatibility. This week: nothing changes in the shop yet, but if you also sell or install new appliances, flag that efficiency mandates on the next generation now face a longer runway.

Federal Register (public inspection) — DOE proposed rule on Process Rule procedures and significant-energy-savings threshold · Federal Register — Energy Conservation Program: Review of DOE's Analytic Methods for Setting Energy Conservation Standards

SUPPLY

EPA lifted the January 1, 2026 deadline barring new installs of pre-2025 R-410A equipment, but refrigerant supply stays tight and wholesale prices keep climbing.

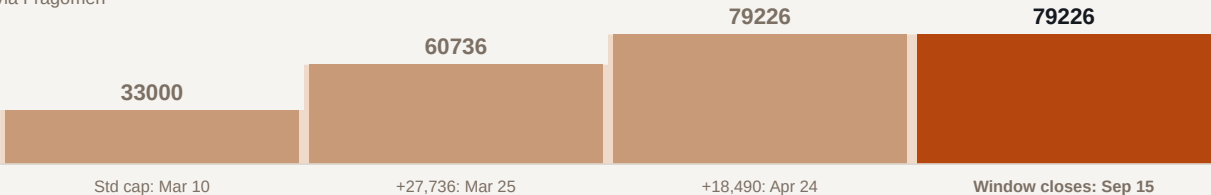
**Why it matters:** EPA finalized a reconsideration of its AIM Act Technology Transitions Rule on May 26, removing the deadline that would have barred installing new residential and light-commercial AC and heat-pump systems built with higher-GWP refrigerant like R-410A if manufactured before January 1, 2025. HARDI, the HVAC distributors' trade group, welcomed relief from a deadline disconnected from how projects are planned, but noted it applies only to federal enforcement — state and local codes can still restrict installs. That relief hasn't brought prices down: one retailer's pricing update this spring put wholesale R-410A at roughly \$12 to \$25 a pound and \$430 to \$470 for a 25-pound jug, against an estimated \$4 to \$8 five years ago, as the AIM Act phase-down keeps legal HFC supply shrinking. This week: reprice any refrigerant-recharge line item against current wholesale cost, and confirm whether your jurisdiction kept its own installation restriction despite EPA standing down.

EPA — Regulatory Actions on Technology Transitions (AIM Act) · HARDI — HARDI Applauds Quick EPA Action to Deprioritize Federal Enforcement of Installation Prohibitions · AC Direct — R-410A Cost Per Pound: Real 2026 Numbers + 25 Lb Jug Pricing

INFOGRAPHIC 3 / H-2B VISA SUPPLY

H-2B seasonal-worker supply for spring-through-fall 2026 start dates opened in three waves, and the last window closes September 15.

Cumulative H-2B visas available for second-half FY2026 (April-September 2026) start dates, by allocation opening date; USCIS data via Fragomen



The standard 33,000-visa half-year cap was gone by March 10, 2026. Two supplemental allocations more than doubled supply to 79,226 visas, but the second and third only became usable through specific filing windows, and the last — the third allocation — closes September 15, 2026. A landscaping or moving company that hasn't filed by then has no path to H-2B labor until next year's cap opens. Source: [Fragomen — H-2B Cap Reached for Second Half of FY 2026; Supplemental Visas Remain Available](#)

## MONEY

Commerce proposed 25% tariffs on tanker and cargo trailers and 15% on agricultural trailers August 6, 2026, with comments due by August 27.

**Why it matters:** The Bureau of Industry and Security published a notice August 6 proposing to add fourteen more "derivative" articles to the Section 232 steel, aluminum, and copper tariff list, including tanker trailers and tanker semi-trailers (HTSUS 8716.31.00) and other trailers and semi-trailers (HTSUS 8716.40.00) at a proposed 25% rate, and agricultural trailers (HTSUS 8716.20.00) at 15%, tied to a separate agricultural-equipment proclamation. Comments close August 27, and the rates are proposed, not yet in effect — but the direction for a moving company shopping for a new box trailer or tanker unit is toward a higher landed cost, layered on tariffs already on the steel and aluminum in trailer frames and skins. This week: ask your dealer or manufacturer whether current quotes are locked against tariff changes, and if planning a fleet replacement this year, consider ordering before the comment period closes.

Federal Register — Request for Public Comments on the Proposed Implementation of Duties on Additional Aluminum, Steel, and Copper Derivative Articles Under Section 232

## The fraud that reads your invoices before it sends one

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 quotes, change orders and supplier 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.

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- Inbound text
- After-hours
- Web / ad
- Referral

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|                                                     |                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 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            |

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|                                             |                                               |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 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          |
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### 2 SEE EVERYTHING — YOUR DASHBOARDS

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example view - this month

|          |        |          |        |
|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| ANSWERED | BOOKED | CAPTURED | MISSED |
| 312      | 88     | 124      | 0      |

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

**CERNO DEAL DESK • OWNER DASHBOARD**

example view - this month

|      |          |      |     |
|------|----------|------|-----|
| OPEN | AWAITING | SENT | WON |
| 12   | 4        | 18   | 71  |

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

## Wary of AI? Start where it falls over.

Questions? Reach out.

Corrections, tips, or something you want covered next.

**info@cernoglobus.com**

