THE DAILY PULSE

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PAYMENTS • BANKING • LENDING

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COVERAGE WINDOW: AUGUST 27 – SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

THIS WEEK IN BRIEF

A payments-heavy week: twenty-one of the world's largest banks unveiled a joint dollar-stablecoin venture, Stripe and Advent walked away from a record $53 billion bid for PayPal, and X money continued to increase its command over its customer base

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

Stripe and Advent walk away from a $53 billion bid for PayPal

Axios · Aug 28

Stripe and private-equity firm Advent International abandoned their pursuit of PayPal, dropping an approach that valued the company at roughly $53 billion, or $60.50 per share — a deal that would have been the largest fintech acquisition ever. PayPal shares, which had been lifted by takeover speculation, fell sharply as the prospect evaporated. The approach followed a bruising "transition year" for PayPal and came a week after Stripe agreed to buy AI marketplace OpenRouter for $8 billion.

WHY IT MATTERS

The collapse pulls a takeover floor out from under PayPal and puts the spotlight back on its standalone turnaround. That Stripe was willing to attempt a deal this size signals intent to consolidate the payments stack aggressively — and that even a record bid can founder keeps every large processor's M&A math unsettled.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

X drops Stripe for its own X Money to pay US creators

PYMNTS · Sep 2

Effective September 2, X began routing US creator payouts — for its Original Content Rewards Program and subscription revenue — through its in-house X Money service instead of Stripe; international creators stay on Stripe. X Money accounts are held at FDIC-insured Cross River Bank and come with a debit card, 3% cashback and yield of up to 6% for Premium subscribers, and creator payouts now count toward direct-deposit thresholds for higher rates. X is also retiring its Creator Revenue Sharing Program on September 7.

WHY IT MATTERS

Owning the payout rail lets X capture interchange, deposits and engagement that previously flowed to Stripe, while high-yield accounts give creators a reason to leave their money on the platform. It is a concrete step toward the "everything app" ambition — building a bank-like relationship through a chartered-bank partner rather than a charter of its own.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

OpenPayd buys its way to 43 US money-transmitter licenses ahead of a $1.1B Nasdaq listing

PYMNTS · Sep 2

London-based payments-infrastructure firm OpenPayd completed its acquisition of MSB USA Inc., inheriting 43 state money-transmitter licenses and near-instant US regulatory coverage rather than pursuing them state by state. The company plans to go public via a merger with Titan Acquisition Corp. valuing it at up to $1.145 billion (note: SPAC pricing is indicative until close), expected to close in Q4 2026. OpenPayd reported annualized transaction volume above $300 billion and annual recurring revenue exceeding $96 million as of July 31, 2026, serving roughly 1,200 clients.

> WHY IT MATTERS
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> Buying a licensed entity compresses a multi-year US licensing slog into one transaction — the same "acquire the rails" logic banks are applying to stablecoins. For a fintech, US coverage plus a public listing is a bid to become embedded-finance plumbing for other companies just as cross-border and stablecoin flows scale.

LENDING & CREDIT

Beige Book shows a K-shaped consumer — luxury holds up while credit strain deepens

PYMNTS · Sep 2

The Federal Reserve's late-summer Beige Book described modest overall growth alongside a widening split: New York and Richmond districts reported robust luxury and upscale-hotel demand, while Cleveland logged its fourth straight period of declining consumer spending. New York banks reported delinquencies rising across loan categories, and Atlanta contacts said some families were leaning on credit cards, payday loans and buy now, pay later to cover essentials. PYMNTS Intelligence data cited alongside the report found the share of households living paycheck-to-paycheck and struggling to pay bills rose from 18% to 27% (note that this is a survey and not a credit metric).

> WHY IT MATTERS
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> For lenders, a K-shaped economy means blended portfolio metrics mask a deteriorating bottom tier. Rising delinquencies and BNPL/payday reliance among strained households point to higher loss rates in near-prime and subprime books even while top-tier credit performs — an argument for segment-level underwriting and reserving rather than reading average delinquency as "stable."

WHAT TO WATCH

CLARITY Act crypto market-structure bill enters a make-or-break September in the Senate

CNBC · Sep 1

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