THE DAILY PULSE

by Jagdeep Dayal

PAYMENTS • BANKING • LENDING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

COVERAGE WINDOW: SEPTEMBER 8–15, 2026

THIS WEEK IN BRIEF

Washington dominated the week: the President renewed his pledge to cut credit-card swipe fees, federal regulators proposed new oversight of banks' core technology providers, and prediction markets tilted toward a possible rate hike as the FOMC meets. Fiserv detailed a monetization overhaul, Block filed for a national trust charter, mortgage applications slipped as the 30-year rate hit 6.85%, and AI enabled platforms reshape auto lending.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

Fiserv's CEO eyes monetization

Payments Dive · Sep 14

New Fiserv CEO Takis Georgakopoulos, elevated in June, laid out a plan to better monetize under-used assets such as the Finxact core-banking platform and gateway services, telling Payments Dive "you can sell it as a banking core, but there are low-hanging fruit, by offering it as core platform for enterprise customers." The company is targeting $500 million in savings alongside a $100 million technology investment, and expects Project Elevate margin benefits to be roughly 2x higher in 2029 versus 2027. Recent divestitures include an ATM business and an education-financing unit, and Fiserv is weighing a sale of one of its two debit networks, Star or Accel.

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> Fiserv is one of the plumbing giants behind U.S. banks and merchants, so its portfolio pruning and pricing changes could impact thousands of institutions. The debit-network review is worth watching given its relevance to routing and the swipe-fee debate.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

Klarna props up new Apple phones

Payments Dive · Sep 14

Klarna has struck its first major partnership with Apple, providing device-leasing financing for Apple's newest hardware including the foldable iPhone Duo at $1,999, the iPhone 18 Pro from $1,199, and a $799 Apple Watch, according to Payments Dive. Leases typically run 12 or 24 months with monthly payments carrying "no fees" per Apple's site, after which customers can upgrade, buy the device, or exit. CEO Sebastian Siemiatkowski said Klarna was "very pleased" to win the deal after a failed pitch 11 years ago.

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> Embedding a BNPL provider into Apple's flagship upgrade cycle gives Klarna high-volume, high-credit-quality distribution and signals Apple's tilt toward hardware-as-subscription. One analyst framed it as an upgrade incentive more than a payments innovation, as Apple and Klarna can upgrade customers into new products

> earlier (think Auto Leasing by OEM's). However, one has to watch if that were indeed behind the thinking of a leasing/subscription based model.

BANKING & REGULATION

Block seeks OCC bank charter

Banking Dive · Sep 9

Block, the parent of Cash App and Square, filed with the OCC to establish Builders Bank & Trust, a national trust bank offering "custody and related fiduciary services, including for bitcoin and stablecoins," per Banking Dive. The proposed bank would be uninsured and would neither take deposits nor make loans; Block's digital-asset strategy lead Lee Woolley would serve as president and CEO. The filing follows President Trump's May 2026 executive order directing agencies to streamline fintech charters, joining recent moves by Circle, Ripple, Paxos and others.

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> A federal trust charter would give Block a national supervisory framework for its digital-asset custody business, reducing state-by-state friction and lending regulatory legitimacy to crypto custody. The wave of fintech charter filings is steadily blurring the line between banks and technology firms.

LENDING & CREDIT

Solifi's Inovatec acquisition brings AI prowess to auto finance, CEO says

Auto Finance News · Sep 10

Lending-software firm Solifi acquired Inovatec Systems, whose cloud-based, AI-native lending platform will bolster Solifi's auto-lending operations, Auto Finance News reported. CEO Dan Corazzi said the deal, Solifi's third acquisition in the past year, will "accelerate the growth of Solifi's auto lending business," a stated primary objective. The move reflects broader momentum toward embedding AI in loan origination and decisioning across auto finance.

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> Consolidation among lending-technology vendors is arming auto lenders with AI-native origination and decisioning tools at a time when affordability strain is pushing longer loan terms and thinner margins. Whether these AI enabled tools can deliver faster, cheaper underwriting, in a way that is appealing to lenders remains to be seen.

WHAT TO WATCH

Rate Hike Coming in September? Prediction Markets for Next Fed Decision

Federal News Network · Sep 8

Stay ahead of what's moving markets, regulation, and the business of banking.