THE DAILY PULSE

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PAYMENTS • BANKING • LENDING

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COVERAGE WINDOW: SEPTEMBER 14–21, 2026

THIS WEEK IN BRIEF

Regulators leaned toward speed and simplification this week — the FDIC moved to fast-track merger reviews — even as enforcement still bit, with a $710M subprime auto-lending settlement and unresolved Synapse fallout. In payments, agentic-commerce and stablecoin rails advanced with launch of Stablecoin backed credit cards.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

Stripe's wallet embraces AI bots

Payments Dive · Sep 18

Stripe connected its Link digital wallet to AI agents from Meta, xAI and startup Spear Street Technology, letting bots such as Meta's Muse and xAI's Grok complete purchases through Link, Payments Dive reported. Link has roughly 300 million users and integrates with about 1 million merchants. Fintech analyst Simon Taylor said "Link is becoming the wallet agents default to."

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
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> Agentic commerce is moving from demo to distribution, and whoever owns the default wallet at the moment an AI agent checks out captures the transaction. Stripe is racing to become that default, as competition heats up.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

MoneyGram taps stablecoin ally

Payments Dive · Sep 17

MoneyGram partnered with Signify Holdings (operating as Rain) to launch a stablecoin-backed payments card that lets users hold stablecoins, access cash and pay over Visa's network, starting in Colombia with a physical card due before year-end, Payments Dive reported. The card "is stablecoin-backed and is not a traditional bank account or fiat-currency balance." Western Union struck a similar deal with Signify in August.

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
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> Remittance incumbents are wrapping stablecoins in familiar card form factors to defend cross-border volume against crypto-native rivals. Picking Columbia as the first country made sense as people in that country receive large remittances in USD. Having card access to make purchases creates an opportunity for the consumer in Columbia to leave their money in Stablecoins, and make purchases using the Card, thus protecting against inflation (felt in local fiat currency).

BANKING & REGULATION

[FDIC's Hill pushes faster merger review process]

Banking Dive · Sep 18

FDIC Chair Travis Hill proposed rules to speed bank-merger reviews, including a "rapid processing" track that could clear some deals in as few as five days, Banking Dive reported. The agency said average review time has already fallen from 107 days in 2023-24 to 64 days so far in 2026, and a companion proposal would give state-chartered banks parity with national banks. Hill said "a long process is damaging in many ways — it creates uncertainty for employees and customers." A 60-day comment period follows Federal Register publication.

> WHY IT MATTERS
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> A faster, more predictable approval path lowers execution risk on deals and could thaw a bank M&A market that executives have described as stalled. The charter-parity proposal also nudges the calculus, potentially making state charters more attractive.

BANKING & REGULATION

[Synapse victims look to small-claims court]

Banking Dive · Sep 17

More than two years after the Synapse collapse, thousands of Yotta and Juno customers remain locked out of roughly $95 million, and some are now winning individual small-claims judgments against Evolve Bank & Trust — one Minnesota customer recovered $4,735.57, Banking Dive reported. The CFPB has allocated about $55.2 million total for affected customers, but no official CFPB timeline for disbursement has been announced, and a reimbursement contract runs as late as August 2028.

> WHY IT MATTERS
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> The Synapse fallout is the cautionary tale for banking-as-a-service: when a middleware ledger fails, end customers bear the loss and reconciliation drags on for years. It keeps pressure on sponsor banks to own their fintech-partner ledgers and on regulators to define liability.

LENDING & CREDIT

[Credit Acceptance Corp. enters $710M settlement with 40 states]

Auto Finance News · Sep 18

Subprime auto lender Credit Acceptance Corp. agreed to a $710 million settlement with 40 state attorneys general, including roughly $630 million in consumer debt relief and a $60 million payment, Auto Finance News reported. The states alleged the Southfield, Michigan-based lender "disguised financing costs" and pushed borrowers into unnecessary add-on products.

> WHY IT MATTERS
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> One of the largest state-AG actions against an auto lender signals that subprime underwriting and add-on practices remain squarely in enforcers' sights even amid a more deregulatory federal posture. Expect other subprime originators to revisit cost-disclosure and add-on practices.

WHAT TO WATCH

[Clarity Act bill stumbles]

Payments Dive · Sep 17

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