AMERICAN NEWS

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› Canada Counter Tariffs on U.S. Fasteners Begin

Canada imposed previously announced retaliatory tariffs on U.S. fasteners and other imports following the collapse of trade talks with the U.S. in late July. **Canada's counter tariffs on $27 billion of U.S. goods include a 50% duty on fastener code 7318 (screws, bolts, nuts, rivets, washers).**

Steel and aluminum together account for over 300 of the 874 line items and are the most heavily represented categories on the list. Nearly all of Chapter 72 (raw and semi-finished steel — ingots, billets, flat-rolled sheet and coil, bar, rod, wire, and rail; 134 items) and Chapter 73 (fabricated steel articles — tube and pipe, structural shapes, and fasteners) are covered at 50%.

It appears **the countermeasures may be based on U.S. origin under the CUSMA country-of-origin marking rules, not necessarily the country from which the shipment is exported.** Nearly half of all metal fastener imports to Canada come from the U.S. In 2025, Canadian imports from the U.S. for iron or steel screws, bolts, nuts, coach screws, rivets, and washers totaled US$895.6 million.



› Barnes Warns MWFA: Competitors Using AI Will Replace You

"Move now or fall behind," Cohen Barnes of Sundog IT told the Mid-West Fastener Association. If you don't adopt AI, "competitors who use AI will replace you." **You need to buy a company AI license to protect company information**, Barnes said. Just adopting AI is only the beginning. "This isn't a one time project that someone finishes." It is also bigger than one person.


Cohen Barnes

While AI can eliminate specific roles, it also can spur company growth, leading to more jobs by increasing capacity and customer satisfaction. Companies will need employees who have the time and resources to manage AI or bring in outside help. AI leads to greater efficiency, better decisions and increased profitability, Barnes said. **"Start small, learn fast and focus on helping your people do their best work." "Start with something repetitive, low-risk and easy to measure," he advised.**

Barnes advocated for giving employees access to AI, showing a few examples and encouraging experimentation. How employees are trained to use it will govern how it's used, he said. Ask AI to identify productivity patterns and recommend "specific ways to improve my productivity based on my role," Barnes said. Barnes used AI to produce a 13-page, 2,200-word presentation. He also uses AI after business trips. "During and after my time away, AI can prioritize and summarize everything missed – meetings, emails, decisions in minutes instead of my hours," he noted. **For all of its benefits, companies should build guardrails for AI.** Change is inevitable, Barnes said, referring to the industrial revolution and the tech revolution. "Don't trust leaders who still use a rolodex," Barnes said.

› Fed Reserve Speaker: Spending on Services Over Products


Thomas Walstrum

"The macro outlook is pretty good," economist Thomas Walstrum told the Mid-West Fastener Association 2026 FSTNR Week conference. The outlook for manufacturers is "relatively slow growth." **Currently there is increased spending on services vs. products, Walstrum noted. Thus more spending on "therapy rather than televisions."** Walstrum emphasized he was giving his own projections, not speaking for his employer, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

Unemployment is low and inflation could come down – baring economic shocks such as war. Demand is the willingness to spend on what's being supplied. The growth rate is tied to population and productivity, Walstrum said. There are bubbles such as war and monetary and governmental fiscal policies. **Walstrum said high oil prices are "temporary. When less oil is available, prices are bid up." The point of equilibrium is about 2% inflation, which "allows for prices to shift around."** Stagflation comes from "inflation up, growth down," Walstrum said. Currently the Iran war is "creating headwinds" for the U.S. economy." The S&P is not yet forecasting a productivity boost from general AI. So far AI is "noise," Walstrum finds. Walstrum projects unemployment ay 4.4% in 2027.

› Lindeen to MWFA: Ask Better Questions



Kristin Lindeen

How to make the moment best for customer? It can be something as simple as a smile, Kristin Lindeen told MWFA. You even need to smile on the phone. "Want the extra edge? Go the extra mile," Lindeen said at MWFA's 2026 FSTNR Week conference. One way to do that is to **ask better questions by eliminating blame and procrastination. "Why" questions lead to victim thinking, while "who" questions lead to blame. "We cost ourselves too much when we blame," Lindeen said. "Blame does not solve the problem."** Lindeen called for personal integrity. "Being what I say I am. Take ownership, accountability," she advised. "You are in control of your own thinking." Hire character over degrees, she added. Avoid questions such as "when is someone going to train me? No one else is responsible." When a problem develops, "Dive into the pit."

› Fastenal Fastener Sales Pick Up Steam

Amid its strongest monthly sales gain in more than four years, Fastenal reported fastener revenue continued its growth streak. Direct fasteners/hardware (OEM) sales increased 16.7% to US$169.7 million in August, while indirect fasteners/hardware (MRO) sales gained 11.7% to US$15.95 million. **Consolidated sales jumped 16.6% to $812.1 million during August, with daily sales rising 16.6% to $38.7 million.** Sales in the U.S. improved 15.5% to US$672.8 million, while sales growth in Canada/Mexico slowed to 13.6% to US$110.4 million, and "rest of world" sales climbed 28.4% to $26.8 million. August sales to heavy manufacturing customers rose 21.8%, while other manufacturing sales climbed 14.3% and non-residential Construction sales gained 9.6%. Total personnel grew 1.3% to 24,608 during the month.

In the second quarter of 2026, direct fasteners/hardware (OEM) sales increased 16.8% to US$501.2 million, while indirect fasteners/hardware (MRO) sales gained 14.6% to US$231.5 million. Pricing contributed approximately 290 basis points to Q2 sales improvement, down from 350 basis points in the opening quarter.

› FDI Holds Steady After Midyear High Mark

The Fastener Distributor Index held steady 59.9 vs. June's 60, sustaining a level not seen since mid-2021 and marking the 15th consecutive reading above 50 and the fifth month above 55. A draw-down in customer inventories and a slightly softer employment reading were largely offset by further acceleration in sales and slower supplier deliveries.

The seasonally adjusted sales index rose again to 82.7 (from 79.8 in June), with **59% of respondents reporting sales above seasonal expectations (vs. 63% last month, but still above the ~52% average over the past year)**, while the share reporting below the sales index moderated to 63.8 (from a very strong 82.7 in July), though **the share of respondents reporting above-seasonal activity held at 59%**, with 28% reporting below-seasonal sales and 14% in line; on an unadjusted basis the sales index eased only to 65.5 from 71.9. Supplier deliveries jumped to 69 (from 57.8) as **41% of participants reported slower lead times/deliveries (up from 22% in July) and 55% indicated similar levels,** with commentary tying the lengthening to ocean freight cost and availability.

Customer inventories remained lean (eighth consecutive sub-50 reading, at 41.4 vs. 40.6), with **only 3% saying inventories were "too high" and 76% reporting in-line levels.** Employment moderated slightly, as the share noting levels "higher than seasonal norms" eased to 24% (from 28%), 66% reported in line, and 10% noted lower levels. Pricing reaccelerated meaningfully as 55% of respondents saw higher m/m pricing (up from 31% in July) while 45% reported stable pricing and 0% saw lower pricing – lifting the m/m pricing index to 77.6 (from 64.1). **Year-over-year pricing increased for 83% of participants** (vs. 84% in July), with 17% stable and 0% reporting lower y/y pricing (vs. 6% last month), moving the y/y index to 91.4 (from 89.1).

The Forward-Looking Indicator (FLI) eased to 56.9 in August (from 61.6 multi-year high in July), driven primarily by a cooler six-month outlook – which had reached a remarkably strong level in July – along with modestly softer employment and a slight rebuild in customer inventories. On the outlook specifically, **46% of respondents still anticipate higher activity levels six months from now vs. today (was 66% last month),** while just 11% expect lower levels and 43% foresee similar levels (vs. 28%), leaving the balance of expectations still tilted to the upside. Respondent / distributor inventories rose to 60.3 (from 57.8) and customer inventories to 41.4 (from 40.6). August commentary remained constructive, with participants citing resilient end markets, continued new business wins, and ongoing strength in data center and construction-related activity, with freight disruptions and late-summer seasonality creating some near-term variability. Several respondents continued to report strength. **"Customers and end markets are remaining resilient…Data center and sub suppliers continue to be a tailwind for the industry."** "Solid month, we are seeing growth continue in data center and construction related business," one respondent noted.

New business also continued to contribute. "We continue to see increased sales due to new business." Freight and supply chain conditions were a commonly cited theme, consistent with the sharp slowing in supplier deliveries m/m. "Risks related to Strait of Hormuz are affecting ocean freight cost and availability, slowing supplier deliveries." Cost pass-through was also described. "We're still seeing signs of slowdowns in some industries. Tariff uncertainties cause us to lose sleep. Our customers still try and demand better pricing even as shipping costs for a container have nearly tripled." **Much of the moderation appeared to be viewed as seasonal rather than structural.** "End of summer vacationing in August may have contributed to a slightly slower month vs. July," one participant noted. "If September sales get back to normal, then I can write off our August slump as an anomaly."

› Hillman Completes Kanebridge Acquisition

Hillman Solutions Corp. finalized its acquisition of industrial fastener master distributor Kanebridge Corporation for US$315 million. **Kanebridge gives Hillman an immediate, scaled platform to serve long-tail, high-specification fastener requirements across industrial and specialty distribution channels, while creating new cross-sell opportunities across Hillman's existing C&I, Pro and DIY customer base.**

Founded in 1975, Elgin, IL-based Kanebridge supplies more than 44,000 commercial and military-grade fastener SKUs to distributors throughout the U.S. and Canada from warehouses in Illinois and California. Kanebridge will operate as part of Hillman's commercial & industrial business, led by Chris Martin, EVP, Commercial & Industrial. Founded in 1964, Cincinnati-based Hillman offers 110,000 SKUs of fasteners and building hardware to retail customers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, South America and Australia.

› Ferry Cap & Set Screw Sold to Equity Firm

Ferry Cap & Set Screw Company was acquired by Quantum Industrial Holdings. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. Founded in 1906, Cleveland-based Ferry Cap manufactures custom bolts, studs, screws, and other precision fasteners. **"Joining the Quantum family provides Ferry Cap with new resources, operational support, and opportunities for long term growth,"** Ferry Cap stated on social media. "Together, we will invest in our people, strengthen our capabilities, deepen our customer and supplier relationships, and build upon the strong foundation established throughout our history." Quantum Industrial Holdings is a Bingham Farms, MI-based investment firm focused on acquiring and building North American manufacturing businesses.

› Norm Acquires U.S. Fastener Facility



Norm Fasteners acquired an automotive fastener manufacturing operation in Michigan, adding local production to its established North American sales, engineering, logistics and warehousing capabilities.

The acquisition includes a 121,000 sq ft manufacturing facility on a 9.4-acre site and its manufacturing assets. The operation produces high-strength bolts for the automotive industry, with principal processes including cold forming, heat treatment, thread-rolling, sorting and packaging carried out at the facility. **With the addition of the Plymouth, MI factory, the two locations form an integrated North American hub that brings manufacturing, engineering, sales, warehousing and logistics capabilities together within the same region.**



Nedim Uysal

"The acquisition is an important step in our journey to become a truly global fastener manufacturer," stated Nedim Uysal, vice chair of Norm Holding. Norm Fasteners aims to further develop the facility, increasing its annual production capacity to 20,000 tons. "North America is one of our priority growth markets, and Michigan gives us access to an advanced automotive supplier ecosystem, a skilled workforce and strong logistics infrastructure," Uysal added. Norm Fasteners is a U.S. subsidiary of Norm Group, which was founded in 1973 in Turkey. The group has 9 facilities in Turkey and more than 2,000 employees to manufacture bolts and other fasteners.

› Poggipolini Acquires Saturn Fasteners

Italy's Poggipolini Group acquired California-based Saturn Fasteners, strengthening its industrial footprint in the U.S. and its position in the North American aerospace and defense supply chain. **The deal brings new manufacturing capabilities, aerospace fastener expertise and commercial relationships into the Italian group, while expanding its presence in California, a major U.S. aerospace hub.** Saturn Fasteners manufactures and supplies specialty

and standard fasteners for the aerospace industry, with a particular focus on externally threaded aerospace fasteners.

The acquisition marks another step in Poggipolini's transformation from an Italian company with a strong export business into an aerospace & defense platform with an industrial footprint spanning Europe, the U.S. and India. Saturn adds a manufacturing and commercial foothold on the West Coast. Poggipolini has also acquired a majority stake in India's Aero Fasteners. Founded in 1950, Poggipolini designs and manufactures critical fastening systems, Class C components and advanced precision parts for the aerospace and defense industries.

› DSG Expands in South Florida

Distribution Solutions Group strengthened its MRO business by acquiring distributor American Fasteners Corp. in South Florida. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. Founded in 1981 by Manny Benitez, Miami-based American Fasteners distributes screws, bolts, nuts, threaded rods, anchors, power tools, safety products and abrasives through locations Medley, Cutler Bay and Lake Worth. Annual revenue totals $39 million. **The acquisition expands DSG's customer base and presence while providing additional reach into export markets throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.**

Fort Worth, TX-based DSG distributes fasteners and other products to the MROs and OEMs in the industrial technologies markets. DSG was formed in 2022 through the combination of Lawson Products, Gexpro Services, a global supply chain services provider to manufacturing customers, and electronic test & measurement solutions provider TestEquity. DSG employs 4,300 people to serve 190,000 customers in North America, Europe, Asia, South America and the Middle East.

DSG DISTRIBUTION SOLUTIONS GROUP
Powerful Solutions. Proven Results.

› Accu Opens USA Distribution Center & Names Gio Cespedes Managing Director



Accu in the UK expanded its North American operations with the establishment of its first USA distribution center, a 10,000 ft^2 facility in Indianapolis, IN, USA, and the appointment of Gio Cespedes as Managing Director of Accu Components (US). **The Indianapolis facility is intended to provide faster fulfillment and localized support for Accu customers in North America. The company noted that Indiana's manufacturing base in the automotive, electrical and heavy machinery sectors places the operation near key customers and supply chain partners. Cespedes brings industry and leadership experience to the position and will oversee Accu's continued growth in the North American market.**

"I'm excited to join Accu Components at such a pivotal moment as we scale our North American operations," Cespedes said. "Delivering high-quality products through our world-class digital platform, alongside outstanding service, is at the core of our growth, and I look forward to working closely with our team, customers and supply partners to achieve our ambitious goals."

Accu CEO Dan Jack said, "We are thrilled to have Gio join team Accu in this crucial senior role. Gio truly brings a unique blend of industry experience, team leadership, strategic thinking and personal integrity."

Accu Components supplies precision components and fasteners through its digital platform and distribution operations.

› LSG: New Digital Commerce Experience & Promotions


Chris Alton


Camron Carlin

LindFast Solutions Group (LSG), Blaine, MN, USA, a leading industrial distribution supply chain solutions provider, launched a new digital commerce experience designed to enhance the customer experience through greater accessibility, flexibility and convenience across its three premier fastener brands: Star Stainless Screw Company, Stelfast and Lindstrom Fasteners. The platform is now available to customers in the USA, with expansion into Canada planned for 2027. This launch represents an important step in LSG's broader digital transformation and omnichannel strategy, expanding the ways customers can engage, transact and manage procurement activities with the company.

Built around LSG's commitment to delivering exceptional customer experience, the new platform enables customers to place orders online while continuing to leverage the technical expertise, consultative support and relationship-driven service provided by LSG's specialized sales organization. The launch represents a significant investment in LSG's ongoing efforts to simplify procurement, improve responsiveness and provide customers with more ways to engage with the company. The platform reflects a simple philosophy: customers should not have to choose between the convenience of digital commerce and the value of expert support.

LindFast Solutions Group also announced the promotion of Chris Alton to Global Account Manager, recognizing his nearly two decades of industry experience and longstanding commitment to customer success. LindFast Solutions Group also promoted Camron Carlin to the position of Global Account Manager, strengthening the company's growing Global Account program and commitment to delivering exceptional solutions to its customers. ■