



Fall Line Logistics | Flatbed • Heavy Haul • Project Freight • Expedited • Cross-Border

Fall Line Logistics

Weekly Freight Market Update

September 29, 2026

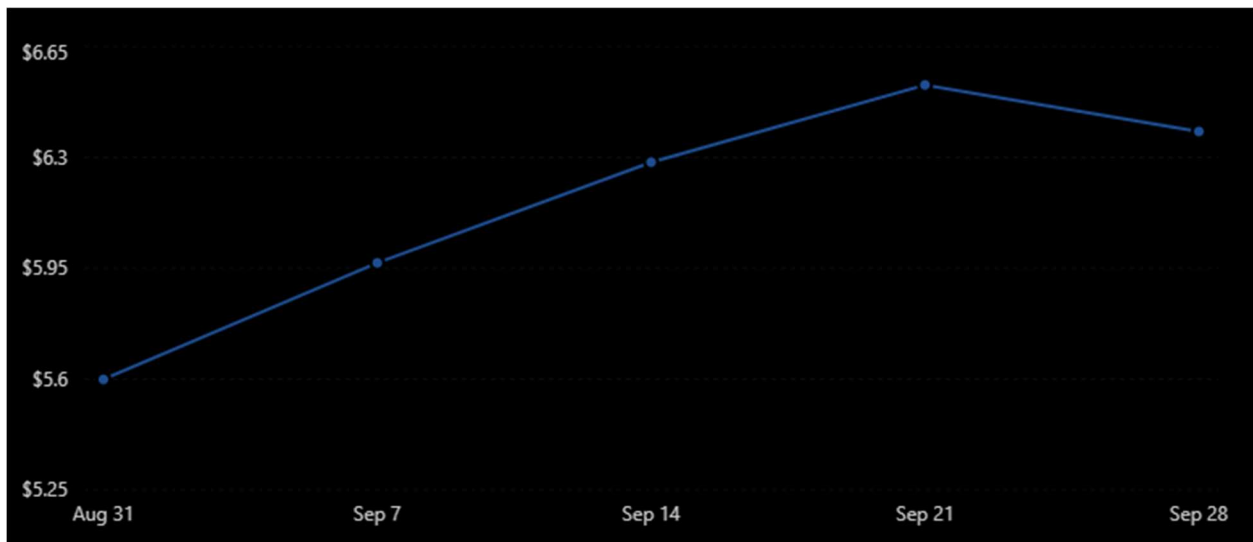
What we're watching this week

Market	Direction	Fall Line view
Diesel	↓ 14.7¢	Relief, but positioning still matters
Flatbed	↑ Slightly	Give project freight 3–5 days
RGN / Heavy Haul	Tight	Correct equipment near origin is key
Dry Van	↑ 4.5¢/mi	Short-notice freight getting more expensive
Imports	Elevated	Coordinate port → final site early
Energy / Data Centers	Active	Specialized equipment demand remains strong
Midwest Projects	↑	\$15B Iowa steel project adds future demand
Southwest / Texas	Weather risk	Watch permitted routes and jobsites

Fuel finally moves lower

U.S. diesel finally turns lower

National on-highway diesel, dollars per gallon.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Diesel dropped 14.7¢ this week to \$6.382 after September's sharp run-up. That's welcome relief, but fuel is still \$2.628/gallon above last year.

For the freight Fall Line handles, truck location matters as much as the national fuel number. An RGN getting 4 MPG burns about \$399 in fuel deadheading 250 miles to pickup at today's price. On flatbed and heavy haul, finding the correct trailer already positioned near the project can have a bigger impact than shaving a few cents off the loaded-mile rate.

Flatbed + specialized capacity

Flatbed rates edged higher again last week, while load postings increased 1.7%. Rates remain roughly 42% above the same week last year.

Standard flatbed is still available. The bigger concern is freight that narrows the equipment pool: low deck heights, long wells, overwidth freight, stretch trailers, multi-axle requirements, tarps or hard jobsite appointments.

Fall Line freight	Planning target
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Standard flatbed	3–5 days
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Simple OD	5–7 days
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RGN / double drop	7–10 days
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Stretch / specialized	1–2 weeks
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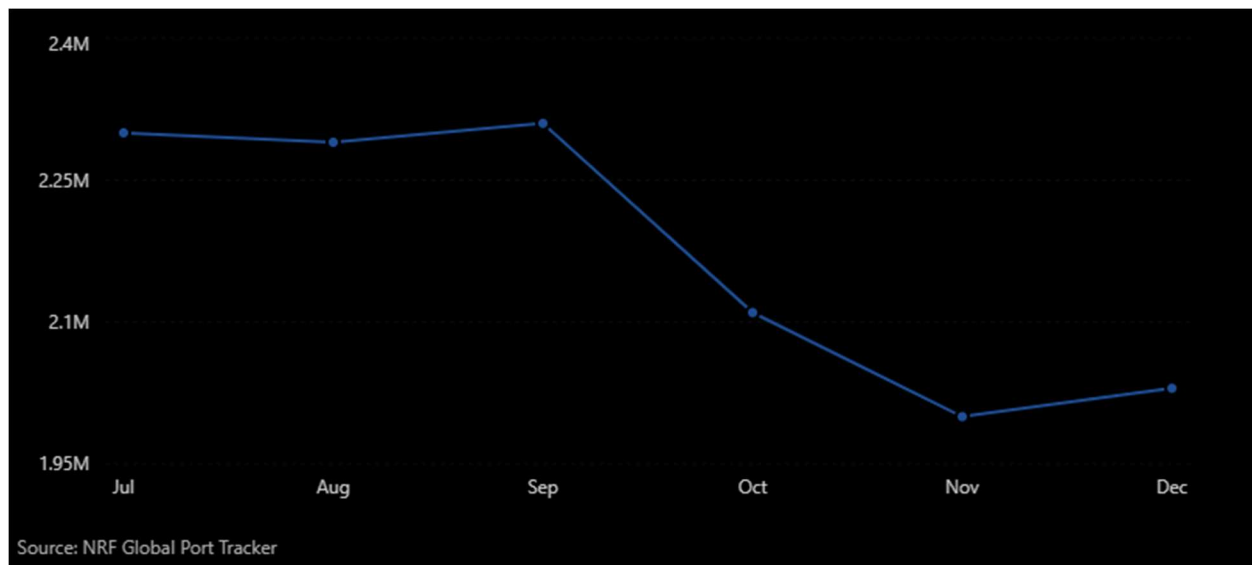
Multi-axle / superload	2+ weeks
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For crane deliveries and construction sites, transportation should be confirmed before the crane and crew schedule becomes immovable. A few hundred dollars saved on the truck disappears quickly if a crane, rigging crew or installation team is sitting onsite waiting.

Imports + project cargo

U.S. import volumes remain elevated

Major U.S. ports, millions of TEU. July actual; August–December forecast.



September imports are forecast at 2.31 million TEU, up 9.6% YoY and potentially the busiest import month of 2026.

For project freight, the important handoff is often what happens after the port. Machinery, steel, electrical equipment and oversized components may need drayage, transload, specialized trailers and a coordinated final site delivery. Having that plan in place before cargo becomes available helps avoid demurrage, chassis days, storage and rushed heavy-haul sourcing.

Houston deserves particular attention: August steel imports increased 54% YoY, while general cargo remains 22% higher YTD.

Energy + data center freight

Grid upgrades, power generation and data-center construction continue creating demand for exactly the equipment used on Fall Line project freight: flatbeds, step decks, RGNs, multi-axle trailers, cranes and escorts.

Transformers, switchgear, E-houses, generators, cooling equipment, steel skids and other fabricated components are moving into projects across the country. DOE continues to identify data centers and manufacturing as significant drivers of new U.S. power and transmission requirements.

For multi-load projects, a rough 30–90 day shipping outlook is useful even when exact dates aren't available. Equipment can be positioned around a project instead of sourcing every load individually at the last minute.

New \$15B Iowa steel project

Mesabi Metallics announced a \$15 billion steel complex planned for southeast Iowa, targeting roughly 7.5 million tons of annual production initially and up to 10 million tons at full buildout. Construction is expected to support approximately 6,000 jobs.

The transportation impact starts during construction: structural steel, electrical equipment, machinery and oversized plant components will require years of flatbed, RGN, crane and rigging capacity. This is another major project worth watching for specialized-capacity pressure across the Midwest.

Weather + permitted freight

The Southwest and Southern Plains are the main concern this week, with heavy rainfall and flooding risk affecting parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and the surrounding Plains.

For normal freight, a closure may mean a detour. For an oversize load, it can mean stopping the truck and revising the permit. Watch I-10, I-25, I-40, US-54 and US-285, and confirm routes again before dispatching permitted freight through the region.

Fall Line take

Fuel finally gave transportation buyers some relief this week. The underlying freight market did not.

Flatbed remains firm, specialized equipment needs lead time, imports are active and energy/data-center construction continues feeding project freight demand.

For the type of freight Fall Line handles, the biggest cost control right now is straightforward: plan specialized equipment earlier, position trucks close to origin, coordinate cranes and jobsites before dispatch, and have the port-to-site plan built before imported cargo becomes available.

