



AMERICAN NEWS

Pac-West Panelists: Fastener Costs Headed Up

Three industry panelists on “What’s New?, What’s Next?” at the Pacific-West Fastener Association spring 2026 conference all predicted fastener price increases. Tim Roberto of LindFast Solutions Group pointed to the weakening U.S. dollar, “especially against the Taiwan dollar. The weak U.S. dollar raises prices of imports.” **Fastener prices are rising due to metal market resurgence, increased logistics costs, energy and labor prices,** Roberto said. He noted that extraction and smelting are reliant on energy and labor costs.

For example the nickel price was \$6.97 a pound at the end of January 2025, but by March 3, 2026 had jumped to \$8.06. Copper rose from \$3.69 to \$4.15 during that period. Nickel is up 30% to 40% and there are copper service disruptions. “China has resurged in copper,” Roberto said. President Trump’s IEEPA tariffs were “muted in the fastener world,” which comes under 232 and 301 tariffs. **The future? Roberto advised fastener executives to develop market planning strategies with key stakeholders, customize production and services to meet market demand and put “emphasis on strong partnerships and communication.”**

Jun Xu of Brighton-Best International said fastener costs are up and one factor is transporting products. Ocean shipping is 20% to 30% higher than pre-Covid, Xu noted. Armed or escorted cargo ships cost more. The U.S. dollar has weakened 6% to 8% in the past 12 months against major currencies, Xu added.

The U.S. debt is at \$38 trillion and the current federal budget adds another \$1.8 trillion dollars to the national debt. There is a \$1 trillion interest payment. In the next 10 to 15 years the U.S. debt will double, Xu projected. That increases consumer costs such as mortgages and all other borrowing. Paying more interest means less money for infrastructure, defense or social programs, Xu pointed out. “If we keep spending more than we make, this could lead to an inflationary cycle we can’t stop,” Xu said. “We can’t afford to spend like we used to,” Xu said. “Neither can anyone else,” Xu added. “So we’re entering back into a multi-polar world where you control your hemispheres of influence.”

Risk and insecurity will increase in multi-polarity, Xu predicted. And the insecurity will lead to higher costs for global trade.” Tariffs are a tax on the cost of goods, not an income, Xu said. Tariffs necessitate “weighted averaging” of inventory, he added. **The “just-in-time” strategy of just a few years ago is being succeeded by “just-in-case,” Xu finds. AI is a “powerful tool” and “super**



intelligence in your hands” offering the fastener industry advantages such as speed and transparency of quoting.

But AI also means fewer people will be needed in a knowledge-based economy, Xu said. “Finding opportunities will become more challenging when everyone has the same intelligence in their hands,” Xu said. “The amplitude and speed of everything will increase. If everyone searches the same questions on the same models, they’ll get the same answers. If humans have a “superpower” it is “creating friction. Centralized knowledge is more vulnerable to attack or sabotage,” Xu cautioned. “Friction creates opportunities.”

Machine intelligence has no limits such as capacity, time, sickness or biases, Xu said. “Intelligence will be frictionless and available to anyone, anytime and anywhere.” **AI can not change the fundamental laws of physics: energy, mass, motion, gravity, space and time, Xu said. “The ability to manage inventory and a supply chain remains a valuable skillset,” Xu said. Though AI can increase the speed and transparency of quoting, it will not marginalize the value of fasteners, and the physical supply of them,” Xu said.**

Paul Tiffany of Copper State Bolt & Nut said construction, infrastructure spending and domestic manufacturing are the primary drivers of demand for U.S. fasteners. Tiffany predicted “relatively stable demand” through 2027 – especially for structural, automotive, heavy equipment, and machinery fasteners. “Tariffs remain the dominant uncertainty and will shape 2026-2027 competitiveness,” Tiffany predicted. Tariffs will influence sourcing decisions, reshoring and customer pricing. Tiffany forecast “steady, but not explosive market growth, with long-term expansion tied to high-spec segments.



The market for U.S. industrial fasteners is projected to grow from \$26.5 billion in 2025 to \$40.7 billion by 2034. The strongest demand will be in aerospace, automotive, industrial machinery and energy infrastructure, Tiffany said. **Automation, plant upgrades and added value propositions will be the differentiator, Tiffany said The U.S. will continue to shift toward engineered, certified and high-spec fasteners, Tiffany predicted.** For example, the transition to electric vehicles requires lightweight, high-strength, corrosion-resistant fasteners, creating new opportunities for innovation and product differentiation. **Fastener manufacturers need to focus on automation, digital traceability, nearshoring, advanced materials and additive manufacturing.**

Tiffany said tariffs on China's steel and aluminum increase costs, which causes margin compression and investment hesitancy for manufacturers. Tariffs typically range from 5% to 25% on manufactured goods, with some industrial categories reaching up to 50%. The EU has imposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. steel, aluminum, motorcycles, bourbon, and other politically sensitive goods, Tiffany noted. Industrial metal products can fall under these measures, he said. Under the current framework, most industrial goods – including fasteners – move between the U.S. and Mexico duty-free if they meet rules of origin. On AI, Tiffany noted that “AI wrote my presentation” and Copper State is using AI in production planning. **“You are crazy if you don't use AI.”**

Boshan Tells Pac-West: Use Creativity More

“Creativity is in our DNA,” consultant Nir Boshan told the spring 2026 conference of the Pacific-West Fastener Association. Humans have 22 genes dedicated to creativity. But humans must keep a balance of analysis and creativity to avoid overdeveloping either. “We never give ourselves enough time to be creative,” he finds. Too much is on autopilot, he said. “Autopilot is great until it isn't.” “Just start,” Boshan said to do when you have an idea. “Take one action.” “We are so good at complicating things,” Boshan observed. Reduce the clutter and red tape in day-to-day lives, he advised.

Boshan said the words we choose matter and he suggested choosing positive words. Technology is a tool, but should “not dominate every moment of our thinking.” He praised the “human ability to look at a problem and come up with creativity.”

Economist Tells Pac-West: Chance of Recession ‘Low’

The chance of a recession within the next year is “low,” Christopher Thornberg of Beacon Economics told the spring 2026 Pacific-West Fastener Association conference. The economic outlook is much the same in March 2026 as it was when Thornberg spoke to Pac-West in March of 2025. The outlook may be even better than a year ago: Consumer spending is at record level and interest rates are down, Thornberg pointed out. Credit is easier to get. There is demand for housing construction and construction lending has increased. A problem: Shortage of labor. In the past a labor shortage could be filled by immigrants. But 1.2 million immigrants are gone, he said. “Immigrants are necessary for jobs,” Thornberg said. The immigration situation needs to be fixed, he urged. “People are not coming here.” Thornberg said he isn't concerned about AI taking away jobs. “Tech has never caused a job loss.” “I want AI to work,” he added. There is a difference between “what we think is happening in our economy – our social narrative or ‘lived experience’ and what is actually happening – or objective statistical reality. Good choices and smart policies start with the correct narrative, Thornberg said. Housing more expensive? Yes, because today's houses are bigger and better, Thornberg said. “We build fancy housing,” People “move up” into new housing and others move up into the housing they leave vacant.

Texas has more labor force than California and labor there is less expensive. But there are alternatives within California for lower costs. He cited the Inland Empire as an example rather than Los Angeles or San Francisco. On the national picture, the reality is any “president does not have much control” over the economy. That involves the social narrative vs. economic reality. “The biggest imbalance is the gap between narratives and reality.” The new rising cost is insurance, which is outpacing inflation of 2.7% The U.S. is not a “trade dependent nation.” Exports are doing fine, Thornberg said noting the busy ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. “You should worry about the deficit,” Thornberg said. The scary part of deficits is that they can't last, he said. Government borrowing takes away private savings. “There will come a point in time when the deficit becomes so enormous” that it threatens the economy. Would foreign wars damage the economy? San Diego defense contractors are busy rebuilding, Thornberg noted. Thornberg said surveys show 70% of Americans think their kids won't have as “good a life” as they had. And the average American today “feels no better off,” today. Thornberg summarized that the economy is growing and incomes are at record high. Insufficient housing in California is “causing labor force contraction.”

IFI Chair: U.S. Tariffs Create “Rough Sea” for Industry

As Larry Spelman concludes his term as chairman of the Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI), the fastener industry finds itself navigating “a rough sea.” For the fastener industry, overlapping pressures from tariffs and onshoring initiatives have had some unintended consequences, the GM for JH Botts said. “When you don't bring imports into the greater supply chain, there are fewer pieces and parts,” Spelman said. “There's not always enough product to go around to fuel everybody's growth.” The confusion surrounding tariffs has also created indecision at the business level. “Whether you're on the right side or the left side of the aisle, people were confused,” Spelman said. “And confusion creates indecisiveness.” Complicating the current economic uncertainty is the rapid emergence of artificial intelligence and what is called the industry's “silver tsunami” — the retirement of experienced toolmakers, machinists, and technical talent. **“There's a lot of skill-set knowledge retiring, and there's not a wave of people behind them,” he said. “Machinery manufacturers are becoming very intentional about making equipment more user-friendly because of that.” This change has led to significant advancements in tooling and equipment innovation over the last 18 months as manufacturers adjust to an evolving workforce.** One solution involves the growing number of apprenticeships in the fastener industry, which Spelman called a promising development. “It feels like it happened overnight,” he stated. “There's a groundswell because people understand how important this is to our industry moving forward.”



Shorttakes

Fastener Group hired Silvana Elliott as supply chain manager based in Calgary. Elliott's 14 years of fastener industry experience includes The Bolt Supply House Ltd. Founded in 1979, The Fastener Group distributes fasteners, tools, and safety gear throughout Western Canada. Preferred Northeast regional manager Mike White was recently elected chair of the **Fastener Industry Coalition (FIC)**. White, the immediate past president of the Metropolitan Fastener Distributors Association, joined Brighton-Best Int'l 15 years ago. Formed in the 1980s, FIC is an association comprised of both regional and national fastener associations, along with organizations that provide services to the fastener industry.

Fastener Industries, Inc. hired Nick Longo as director of sales & supply chain. He started his career in 1997 at hydraulic, pneumatic, and instrumentation fittings manufacturer Brennan. Berea, OH-based Fastener Industries manufactures rivets, drilled products, knurled pins, grooved pins and special shaved fasteners. Employee owned since 1980, Fastener Industries is the parent company of a group of businesses that includes Brainard Rivet Company, Plan-E-Tech Industries, Inc., Joseph Industries, Inc., Ohio Nut & Bolt of Canada, Ltd., and Die Co.

Howmet Aerospace hired Chris Bennett as procurement & supply chain manager. Bennett joins Howmet from RTC Aerospace LLC, where he handled supply chain issues. Pittsburgh-based Howmet Aerospace supplies jet engine components, aerospace fastening systems, and airframe structural components for aerospace and defense applications, as well as forged aluminum wheels for commercial transportation.

Space-Lok promoted Joseph Sockett to director of engineering & quality. Sockett joined Space-Lok in 2020 as engineering manager. Previously he worked for LISI Aerospace. He earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from California State University, Long Beach. Founded in 1962, Gardena, CA-based Space-Lok is a Novaria Group company that manufactures fasteners and component mechanisms for the aerospace industry.

Stanley Black & Decker promoted Kyle Zarate to director of channel marketing for strategic growth initiatives focusing on anchors and fasteners. Zarate joined Stanley Black & Decker in 2012. Most recently he

served as group channel manager of anchors and fasteners. In December 2025, Stanley Black & Decker agreed to sell its Consolidated Aerospace Manufacturing (CAM) business for \$1.8 billion in cash to Howmet Aerospace.

Stelfast Division president O.J. Simpson is retiring. "After over 40 wonderful years in the fastener world, I will be retiring. This decision comes with mixed emotions... excitement for the next chapter of my life, and gratitude for the friends I've made over the years. "Shout out to my east coast fastener friends who were there for me when my son passed many years ago." Simpson joined Stelfast in 2011 as national sales manager before his promotion to division president in 2020. Founded in 1972 as Eses Ltd., Strongsville, OH-based Stelfast imports and distributes fasteners through branches in Chicago, New Jersey, Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Toronto, Montreal and Seattle.

Sundram Fasteners shareholders approved a resolution to reappoint managing director Arathi Krishna for another five-year term through May 2031. The vote signals investor support for the company's existing strategy and governance framework. In February Sundram Fasteners reported revenue grew 18% to Rs. 1,359 crores (US\$150.85 million) across OE and aftermarket segments. The India-based company is expanding its non-automotive portfolio to 38% of revenues through wind energy, aerospace, and railway fasteners growth. Founded in 1966, Sundram Fasteners provides fasteners and other components for the automotive, infrastructure, windmill and aviation sectors in India, China, Germany, the U.S., the UK, Italy, France and Brazil.

Kerr Lakeside Expands Cold Forming Capabilities

Alexander Kerr, President, Kerr Lakeside Inc., Euclid, OH, USA, reports, "Kerr Lakeside is investing in the future of cold forming. We're proud to **announce the addition of two major pieces of equipment to the manufacturing floor**":

- **National Machinery Formax FX35M:** Now operational, and capable of up to 300 ppm, enhancing #8 to 7/16" (4 to 10 mm) diameter range with lengths up to 3". One of the most trusted platforms in cold forming is now on the floor.
- **Nedschroef NB522L:** A brand new long stroke 5-station bolt former is arriving July 2026. Running up to 140 ppm with a size range of 1/2" to 3/4" diameter and 1" to 7" length, this machine significantly expands larger diameter cold forming abilities.

"These investments reflect our commitment to growing alongside the industries we serve. More capacity. More capability. Same quality and service Kerr Lakeside has delivered since 1948." Kerr Lakeside makes high-quality socket screw products, cold-formed specials and screw machine products with a catalog of 2430 standard and semi-standard socket cap screw products in Inch and Metric.



APF Celebrates 50 Years

All-Pro Fasteners, Inc. (APF), Arlington, TX, USA, reports, "We're celebrating our 50th year of providing comprehensive, high-quality fastening solutions for our customers. From All-Pro's humble beginnings in 1976 to becoming a leader in fastener supply, our commitment to providing customers with high-quality fastening solutions hasn't changed. Our legacy of fastener quality continues with the ongoing expansion of our A2LA-certified quality assurance lab, allowing us to offer some of the most advanced testing in the industry."



All-Pro Fasteners is a full-line, full-service fastener company that distributes a complete line of bolts, nuts, washers, screws and fastener-related components throughout the USA. All-Pro Fasteners' manufacturing and distribution facilities, combined with inventory management solutions, allow it to offer "Total Cost Reduction" programs to the petrochemical and oil field industries.



PennAero Expands Capabilities with Completion of TriMas Aerospace Acquisition

PennAero, El Segundo, CA, USA, has announced the completion of its acquisition of TriMas Corporation's aerospace assets, bringing together two established manufacturers to create a broader, more capable independent supplier for the global aerospace, defense, space and advanced energy markets. **The addition of the TriMas Aerospace companies significantly expands PennAero's product portfolio and engineering capabilities. For existing customers of both companies, business continues as usual, with more resources, broader capability and a stronger long-term partner behind them.** For companies looking for an independent alternative to the industry's largest consolidators, PennAero is now that option at scale.

"This marks an important milestone for PennAero," said Ryan Kinslow, CEO of PennAero. "We believe the combined strengths of our teams, technologies and customer relationships position us exceptionally well for long-term growth. We will continue to invest in the capabilities to support the critical applications our customers rely on."

The TriMas Aerospace companies joining PennAero include Monogram Aerospace Fasteners, Allfast Fastening Systems, Mac Fasteners, TFI Aerospace, Martinic Engineering, RSA Engineered Products, Weldmac Manufacturing Company and TAG (formerly TriMas Aerospace Germany). These brands each have longstanding customer relationships and deep engineering expertise across the world's major commercial and defense programs.



Fastenal Celebrates 25 Years in Mexico

Winona, MN, USA-based Fastenal Company, a global leader in supply chain solutions and industrial distribution, marks its 25th anniversary in Mexico, underscoring a legacy of growth, innovation and deep local partnerships. The decision to enter the Mexico market came in 2000, and the Apodaca branch officially began doing business early the following year.



▲ Kenneth LeVey

▲ Andrew Kalnow (right)

IFI Presents Soaring Eagle Awards

Each year, the Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI) honors individuals whose innovation, leadership and dedication elevate the industry and strengthen the community that supports it. The 2026 recipients exemplify that spirit.

The 2026 Soaring Eagle Technology Award went to Kenneth LeVey, recognized for outstanding, prolific technical contributions to the fastener industry. Through his career, he has shown creativity, discipline and engineering expertise resulting in many innovative fastener designs and 26 U.S. patents.

The 2026 Soaring Eagle Service Award recipient is Andrew Kalnow whose leadership played a role in the revival of National Machinery beginning in 2002, transforming the company into one of the most influential forces in North American fastener manufacturing. Under his direction, National Machinery grew into a cornerstone of the industry, with some 2000 cold formers operating across nearly every segment of fastener production. ■

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