



The weekly brief on the U.S. critical-minerals, rare-earth, and coal build-out, for the people who staff and supply it.

TOP SIGNAL OF THE WEEK

The Army Corps started a 29-month clock on an Alaska copper mine

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers published a notice of intent on September 18 to prepare an environmental impact statement for the Arctic project in northwestern Alaska's Ambler Mining District, formally starting the review under the National Environmental Policy Act and opening the public scoping phase. The project belongs to Ambler Metals, the 50/50 joint venture between Trilogy Metals (NYSE American, TSX: TMQ) and South32. The Corps is lead federal agency and holds the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit application Ambler Metals filed on April 20.

What makes the date worth writing down is the schedule behind it. The Corps and its cooperating agencies have committed to **an estimated 29-month integrated federal and state review**, targeting a draft statement in October 2027, a record of decision in September 2028 and overall completion in November 2028, to run concurrently with State of Alaska and Northwest Arctic Borough permitting milestones. Trilogy calls that materially ahead of the historical baseline for comparable federal reviews, which is the company's characterization and not ours.

The schedule is not a press release claim. The Arctic project is covered by FAST-41, and its timetable was published on the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council's Permitting Dashboard in July 2026. **This notice is the first key federal milestone on that published schedule, and it arrived on it.** The dates above therefore sit on a public federal tracker rather than in an investor deck, and any slippage should show there first.

Issue 015 reported the approximately \$35.6 million Department of War equity investment closing on September 11.

One practical limit for anyone planning to comment. **There is still no scoping deadline.** The release states none, and as of September 23 the Federal Register carried no notice for this project, checked against the project name, the mining district and the Corps' own filings. Scoping is open; the date comments are due is not yet public.

Sources: [Ambler Metals release, September 18, 2026](#); [Trilogy Metals Form 8-K Exhibit 99.1, September 21, 2026](#).

BUILD-OUT & FUNDING MOVES

SURPLUS MATERIALS Sep 18

Five nuclear cleanup sites are offering twelve surplus materials, and responses close November 2. The Energy Department's Office of Environmental Management published an expression of interest on September 18 covering "surplus critical minerals, rare earth elements and other materials" at Paducah in Kentucky, Portsmouth in Ohio, Oak Ridge in Tennessee, the Nevada National Security Site, and Moab in Utah. The twelve are aluminum, cesium-137, chloride, copper, fluorine, lead, lithium hydride, platinum, selenium, silver, tungsten and vanadium, all residue of past weapons production and energy research. The notice is classified "Sources Sought" and states, in capitals, that it is an expression of interest only and that **no funding opportunity exists**. Respondents would own the extraction or reprocessing and must bring their own equipment; the ninth question asks whether they would consider leasing land or developing a facility on a site. Responses are due 5 p.m. Eastern, after a virtual Industry Day on September 30. **Site-specific quantities were in an appendix posted on September 18; SAM.gov lists it as deleted on September 23, with no replacement.**

Sources: [Energy Department, September 18, 2026](#); [SAM.gov notice DOE Critical Mineral Resource 2026, published September 18, 2026](#).

COAL ASH Sep 16

Indiana has 101 coal-ash units, and its permit program now has a comment deadline.

The Environmental Protection Agency proposed on September 16 to approve Indiana's coal combustion residuals permit program in part, to operate "in lieu of the Federal CCR program." The state's environmental management department has identified 101 units: 14 coal-ash landfills, 44 surface impoundments, 19 legacy surface impoundments and 24 potential coal combustion residuals management units. Issue 015 carried Wisconsin's, landfills only; Indiana's takes impoundments too. **Comments are due November 16**, a Monday, and a hybrid in-person and online hearing is set for November 12, a Thursday.

Source: [91 FR 58616, September 16, 2026](#).

URANIUM AND VANADIUM Sep 15

A Colorado uranium and vanadium mine is one board vote from its last state permit.

Anfield Energy (TSX.V, Nasdaq: AEC) disclosed on September 15 that Colorado's Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, by a rationale dated August 24, recommended that the state's Mined Land Reclamation Board approve its subsidiary Highbury Resources' 112d reclamation permit application. The Division had found the application complete nine months earlier, on December 22, 2025. The Board hears it at its October 14 and 15 meeting in Denver, which the company calls its final state permitting step. The JD-8 mine sits about 11 miles west of Naturita in Montrose County, on 28.3 acres inside Department of Energy Uranium Leasing Program lease tracts. No milling is proposed on site; ore would go to Anfield's Shootaring Canyon Mill in Utah. The company targets a restart by the end of the second quarter of 2027, and rests that decision on historical data rather than a feasibility study.

Source: [Form 6-K Exhibit 99.1, September 15, 2026](#).

ALSO THIS WEEK

America's first new iron ore mine in 50 years began starting up. The Export-Import Bank's chairman toured Mesabi Metallics at Nashwauk, Minnesota, on September 17. It employs more than 200, expects about 350 more at full capacity, and has more than 1,500 construction contractors on site. A member of Congress, not the Bank, put the financing at up to \$10 billion; the Bank names no instrument or amount of its own. [Export-Import Bank, September 17](#).

Two more coal units were ordered to stay available, both in Indiana. The Secretary of Energy directed Northern Indiana Public Service Company, CenterPoint Energy and grid operator MISO to keep specified units at the R.M. Schahfer and F.B. Culley stations available from September 20 to December 18. Issue 014 carried the same instrument for a Florida unit. [Energy Department, September 19](#).

A federal coal decision added 1.74 million tons and no jobs. The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement made a finding of no significant impact on September 21 and approved Revision 40 to the Falkirk Mine plan in McLean County, North Dakota, authorizing 1.74 million more tons of federal coal under lease NDM 111489. The coal supplies Coal Creek Station, the state's largest power plant. The release's "more than 400 full-time jobs" is existing payroll, not a hiring plan. [Office of Surface Mining, September 21](#).

A titanium furnace ran continuously in Virginia. IperionX said on September 16 that its GenX furnace at South Boston processed more than 500 kilograms of titanium powder across four continuous runs totaling 41 hours, using more than 75% less power per kilogram than its batch process. [IperionX, September 16](#).

HIRING & STAFFING DEMAND

Three boards, read on September 21 in a browser that runs JavaScript. Every count below is checked against the board's own published counter.

URANIUM ENRICHMENT Ohio and Tennessee

Centrus Energy's board carried 95 openings: 55 at Piketon, Ohio, 31 at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, 4 at Bethesda, Maryland and 5 elsewhere. **Twenty carry post dates inside this window and seven are dated September 21**, the largest in-window block on this beat, nine at Piketon and eleven at Oak Ridge, from a service worker to a reliability engineer. The company signed a definitive multi-year contract on September 17 to supply Antares Nuclear with high-assay low-enriched uranium, with prepayments and no disclosed value, from its American Centrifuge Plant at Piketon. Portsmouth, one of the five cleanup sites above, is the Piketon plant.

Sources: [Centrus careers](#), read September 21, 2026; [Form 8-K Exhibit 99.1, September 17, 2026](#); [Energy Department, Portsmouth Site](#).

RARE EARTHS Texas and California

MP Materials' board carried 160 openings, the largest on this beat: 118 at Fort Worth, Texas, 31 at Mountain Pass, California, 9 at Las Vegas and 2 in Washington, D.C. Twelve carry post dates inside this window, nine of them at Fort Worth. **The weight is magnet manufacturing in Texas rather than mining in California, by nearly four to one**, and the titles say the same: a powder metallurgy process engineer at Fort Worth, two environmental specialists at Mountain Pass. The company published nothing in the window; its newest release is dated September 2.

Source: [MP Materials careers](#) and the applicant-tracking board reached from it, read September 21, 2026.

TUNGSTEN Maine, Ohio and Michigan

Elmet Technologies' board is **down to 17 from the 22 Issue 015 read on September 14**: 7 at Lewiston, Maine, 6 at Euclid, Ohio and 4 at Coldwater, Michigan. Four of the five removals are at Euclid, the plant the Department of War said its \$450 million investment would preserve rather than grow. Two listings carry post dates inside this window, both at Coldwater, a sintering machine operator dated September 21 and a hot press operator dated September 16. Treat the second cautiously: Issue 015 counted a Coldwater hot press operator inside its own window, so a post date here can evidently be refreshed.

Source: [Elmet Technologies job opportunities](#), read September 21, 2026.

ROLES IN DEMAND THIS WEEK

Centrus Energy Piketon, Ohio and Oak Ridge, Tennessee

95 open roles

Service worker through to reliability engineer

Nine at Piketon, eleven at Oak Ridge

Twenty dated in the window, seven on September 21

MP Materials Fort Worth, Texas and Mountain Pass, California

160 open roles

Powder metallurgy process engineer, Fort Worth

Two environmental specialists, Mountain Pass

118 at Fort Worth against 31 at Mountain Pass

Elmet Technologies Lewiston, Maine; Euclid, Ohio; Coldwater, Michigan

17 open roles

Sintering machine operator, Coldwater

Hot press operator, Coldwater, post date evidently refreshed

Down from the 22 Issue 015 read on September 14

Roles as named or directly implied by each company.

FEATURED COMMODITY EXPLAINER

FEATURED: VANADIUM

The United States stopped mining vanadium in early 2020, and its import reliance has fallen twenty points since. Both halves of that come from the same place, and it is not a mine.

That production was in Utah, from mining the uraniferous sandstones of the Colorado Plateau, and it was not restarted in 2025. What grew instead was secondary recovery in Arkansas, Delaware, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas, where petroleum residues, spent catalysts and **utility ash** are processed into ferrovanadium, vanadium chemicals and vanadium pentoxide. That output rose from an estimated 3,200 tonnes in 2021 to an estimated 7,500 in 2025, and net import reliance fell from 61% to 41% of apparent consumption while consumption itself rose.

Two of this issue's blocks are the same rock and the same alloy. Colorado Plateau of uranium sandstone is what JD-8 would reopen. And vanadium is the V in Ti-6Al-4V, the alloy whose oxygen limit IperionX measured its powder against: the Geological Survey records no acceptable substitute for vanadium in aerospace titanium alloys.

U.S. VANADIUM AT A GLANCE

zero

mine production from ore each year 2021 to 2025, 2025 estimated

74%

of world mine production China, 82,000 of 110,000 tonnes, 2025 estimated

None

in the Government Stockpile the sheet's own one-word entry

\$14.14

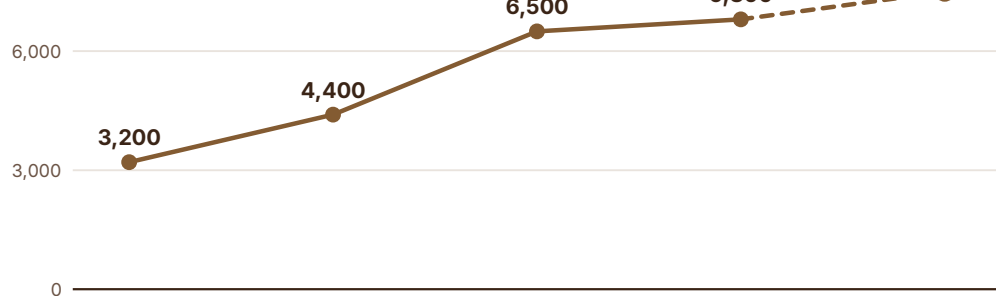
a pound, ferrovanadium U.S. 2025 price, against \$13.05 in 2024

Vanadium is recovered in the United States from petroleum residues, spent catalysts and utility ash, in five states that do not include a mine.

Data: USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026, Vanadium: world production, stockpile, price. Chart by Upstream Signals.

U.S. VANADIUM NOW COMES OUT OF WASTE, NOT ORE

Secondary production from ash, residues and spent catalysts, metric tons of vanadium content.



USGS marks this entire row estimated; 2025 carries a second estimate mark as the current year, which is what the hollow marker shows. Production from primary ore and concentrate was zero in all five years.

Data: USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026, Vanadium, printed pp. 202 to 203. Chart by Upstream Signals.

Figures: [USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026, Version 1.3](#), chapter dated February 2026.

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