

# KECO GPR Delivers Quality Repairs, Speeds Turnaround at Tennessee Shop



by Autobody News Staff

Mitchell's Body Shop has deep roots in Madison County, TN, where the third-generation company has delivered quality collision repair services since 1952.

Founded by **Robert Mitchell** in a garage behind his home in Bemis, the company specialized in painting cars. Over the years, Mitchell's developed a loyal following and a reputation for top-notch customer service.

His son, **Bob**, grew up in the business. After briefly attending college, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, piloting helicopters during the Vietnam War. Upon his retirement with the rank of colonel, he wasn't interested in joining the family firm. But unable to land a job flying helicopters to Gulf Coast oil rigs, he ultimately was hired as operations manager at a Chevy dealership.

In the mid-1980s, he attended a seminar on improving body shop efficiency and layout. Excited by what he learned, Mitchell proposed implementing changes, but was shot down by the dealership owner who refused to invest in improvements. It was a defining moment, recalled his son-in-law **Andy Spence**, Mitchell's president and general manager.

"At that moment, my father-in-law decided to go out on his own. His father had just retired and closed Mitchell's in Bemis. So he and a [former] partner borrowed the money and built what is now Mitchell's Body Shop in Jackson," said Spence, who joined the company in 2001 and assumed full ownership in 2010 upon his father-in-law's retirement.

The rest is history. The 17,000 square-foot shop — which includes *Tri-Star ADAS*, a new 4,000-square-foot sister company dedicated to ADAS calibrations — specializes in all things related to collision repair and consistently strives for excellence.

As a testament to a quality-centric culture, Mitchell's boasts I-CAR Gold Class certification and employs technicians who are both trained and certified by I-CAR in various disciplines, including structural and non-structural repairs and ADAS calibrations.

Mitchell's also holds numerous



**Mitchell's Body Shop, a third-generation family-owned and operated business, was founded in 1952.**

OEM certifications for both domestic and import marques, including Toyota, which recently named the company its only certified collision repair facility between Memphis and Nashville.

To ensure that every repair meets automakers' specifications, Spence has invested in OEM software. "We found that we can buy the software cheaper from the OEMs instead of paying a [third party] fee."

A self-described forward thinker intent on streamlining operations and improving processes, Spence believes in supporting his staff with the latest equipment.

Case in point: A hefty investment in several KECO Glue Pull Repair products, including KECO's new L2E Glue Pull Repair Collision System and GPR Plus System.

While acknowledging he knew about GPR technology, Spence credits master body technician **Justin Taylor** with prodding him to take a deeper dive.

"Justin had watched KECO videos on YouTube and was impressed. He thought this was something that could help us. So while I was at SEMA in 2022, my main purpose was to purchase a KECO system," said Spence.

"The fact that you're not destroying the factory corrosion protection on the backside of the panel, that you're using less filler, which means you get a better quality repair, and that it takes less time than a conventional repair, it's worth the investment," he added.

Taylor concurred. "I found the videos interesting, because

you can see the damage much better when the paint is still on the vehicle. You have more surface area with the Glue Pull tabs and you can pull out the metal a lot easier than when you're using a stud welder.

"And because you're not burning the backside of the panel, it's less intrusive," Taylor added. "When you're welding, you can damage electrical components that are inside the vehicle, which you need to think about when working on EVs."

Taylor said KECO training, both online and in person, helped Mitchell's team learn to use the equipment. "Glue Pull speeds up the process and you get a better job. Everybody uses it all the time instead of stud welding. But there's definitely a learning curve. You're pushing yourself to learn something new and to keep getting better and better."

In reflecting on his company's culture, which embraces staff as family and strives for excellence, Spence said, "You want your employees to feel like they're part of something bigger than just getting a paycheck — to feel better about a company that cares about them, provides an opportunity and wants to invest in them."

"The hope is that you develop a team that appreciates that. I'm lucky that I've got a team that's open minded and not stuck in their ways. They understand that this business is a moving target, that things are constantly changing, and if we want to be the best, we have to strive for that every day."

## Mitchell's Body Shop

Jackson, TN

**731-427-6446**

[mitchellsbodyshop.com](http://mitchellsbodyshop.com)

## Company At A Glance...

**Type:** Collision Repair

**Facility Employees:** 24

**In Business Since:** 1952

**Number of Locations:** One

**Production Space:**

17,000 square feet



**Master body technician Justin Taylor uses the KECO K-Power Lateral Tension Tool on the lower rear body section of a Toyota RAV4 to push the lower flange outward for a correction in panel alignment.**



**Techs Taylor and Ezequiel Chapina employ the KECO K-Tower, along with components and tools from the KECO L2E system, to repair a damaged bedside panel on a Chevrolet Silverado.**

## KECO Body Repair Products

**888-532-6822**

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