

Kendrick Paint & Body Evolves Its Refinish Operation with PPG's MoonWalk System



by Autobody News Staff

Kendrick Paint & Body was founded in 1952 by **James Kendrick**, as a single-stall repair shop in Augusta, GA. Seventy-two years later, it has grown to nine auto body shops — five in Augusta, where its corporate headquarters are located, one each in the neighboring towns of Evans and Martinez and two more in Aiken, SC — with plans to open a 10th in 2024.

All Kendrick shops are I-CAR Gold Class certified, and several employees have achieved Platinum certification. The business also has 14 OEM certifications.

Kendrick has been a family-run operation since its founding. When James retired, his sons, **Jimmy** and **Steve Sr.**, took the reins. Now, Steve Sr.'s son, **Steve Jr.**, is running the show. His daughter, **Ansley**, graduated from college in 2022 and is now vice president of operations, learning the ins and outs of the company to one day step up and become the fourth generation to run it.

CEO **David Clark** said Ansley is a big proponent of exploring new technology and embracing the innovations that can improve Kendrick's processes.

"She's really challenging us to make sure we're staying on the forefront," Clark said.

As a result of that openness to new ideas, Kendrick recently switched to PPG from its previous paint vendor of 50 years. While the shop was still pleased with its previous vendor's product, it was PPG's MoonWalk automated paint-mixing system that pushed Kendrick to make the change.

The MoonWalk system takes an image of a vehicle panel, captured with a DigiMatch spectrophotometer, and uses it to create a matching formula. A technician then loads the required toners on a dispensing rack, which MoonWalk uses to automatically dispense the exact amount of each toner needed.

Before switching to PPG, Kendrick had a paint-mixing station with a full inventory of toners in each of its five shops in downtown Augusta. Now it has two MoonWalk systems that mix paint for those five shops. Eventually, those two systems will service all of Kendrick's operations



Kendrick Paint & Body in Augusta, GA, switched to PPG for its MoonWalk automated paint-mixing system, leading to improvements in quality, efficiency and cost containment.

in the Augusta and Aiken markets.

"Steve Jr.'s father and uncle at one time had a guy who did all the mixing centrally, so painters wouldn't mix their own," Clark said. "It's something we weren't unfamiliar with, but now we're using technology to get back into that."

Clark said some of Kendrick's painters were wary of losing control of the paint mix, but now that they've seen how easy — and accurate — it is, he doesn't think they would ever agree to go back to the old way.

"The way this system works, a painter can go out and take a camera shot of a panel that needs to be painted, upload it to the computer, along with the amount of ounces they need, and push it over to the centralized mix room," Clark said. "The team there mixes that color to exactly what the painter needs, then delivers it to the painter. It's become basically the Amazon for our paint department."

Clark said that took a simple but sometimes time-consuming task out of the hands of the painters, who can use that time instead to do what they're most skilled at — painting cars.

"We're probably saving 45 minutes a day per painter in mixing color, or about five hours a week, which could essentially be one extra booth cycle a day," Clark said. "We're just trying to figure out the most effective ways to allow our skilled talent to perform to the highest level every day."

The MoonWalk system also reduces overpours, improves accuracy of the mix, and reduces waste, as it uses "99.95% of the

product inside the bottle," Clark said.

Overall, the team at Kendrick has seen improvements in quality, efficiency and cost containment.

"It's next-level for us," Clark said.

"In the next day, we'll hit 1,000 mixes [with the MoonWalk system]," Clark said. "The efficiency piece of it is just insane, and getting better and better every day as our team figures out ways to test the boundaries of it."

The team at Kendrick is also happy with the PPG Envirobase High Performance waterborne paint system.

"PPG developed a modifier to add to the base coat which enhances their product to be a one-visit application, so that was a game changer for us," Clark said. "At that point, product-to-product, it was a head-to-head battle [with the previous vendor]."

The color match has been spot-on, Clark said. "I have not heard of any issues at all and I don't expect to, due to the accuracy of the pours every time."

Kendrick enjoys a great relationship with the business support team at PPG, including **Jason Lowry**, strategic accounts director — who started his career training at Kendrick as a young paint sales representative — and trainers who have worked with technicians, managers and customer service representatives.

"We were really looking for support with business development, and PPG had a strong team of people we felt would help us navigate through that," Clark said. "From a support piece, we felt PPG was a step ahead."

Kendrick Paint & Body

Augusta, GA

706-724-4071

kendrickbodyshop.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: 205

In Business Since: 1952

Number of Locations: Nine

Combined Production Space:

250,000 square feet



Janice Williamson uses the PPG MoonWalk to precisely measure and mix toners.



Bryan Thompson captures a picture of a vehicle's finish with the DigiMatch spectrophotometer, which will then be used to create the right formula.

PPG

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