

Driverless Cars Will Be A Boon For Auto Repair Shops, Expert Says

In column for trade magazine, veteran mechanic Jason Bigelow of Aberdeen, N.J.-based Advanced Tire & Auto Center highlights the potential upside of driverless cars for repair shops

Aberdeen, NJ ([PRWEB](#)) August 10, 2016 -- Critics worry that autonomous vehicles will put auto repair shops out of business—but one veteran mechanic isn't buying it.

“Owning and operating a repair shop for over 21 years has taught me that only one thing is certain about the automotive industry—it is always changing and moving,” writes Jason Bigelow of Aberdeen, N.J.-based Advanced Tire & Auto Center, in the August issue of trade magazine Aftermarket Business.

Titled “Driverless cars can drive up the bottom line at repair shops,” Bigelow’s column emphasizes the potential benefits to repair shops of a nationwide shift to driverless cars, which some manufacturers aim to roll out by as early as 2020.

“Despite the naysayers, I am actually excited about how this will affect the automotive repair industry,” writes Bigelow, whose shop specializes in diagnosing and repairing state-of-the-art, 21st-century vehicles. From a mechanical and electrical perspective, Bigelow writes, autonomous vehicles are not much different from the vehicles technicians already service on a daily basis.

“The autonomous features are just that—‘features’ designed to replace drivers, not cars,” he writes. “The goal is to add operational awareness and intelligence without replacing any of the components that make human-controlled cars operate.”

Indeed, over the past decade manufacturers have already added the likes of parking assist, lane departure, 360 degree-view cameras and crash-avoidance systems without any corresponding erosion of the auto repair business, Bigelow notes. Today, the vehicles entering shops for maintenance or repairs sit parked 95 percent of the time. Tomorrow, he writes, fleets of driverless cars will spend nearly all their time on the road—with an increase in wear and tear and a proportionate need for maintenance and repair.

“With time, fleets of driverless cars will fan out across the country to deliver groceries and mall merchandise, take seniors to church or doctor’s appointments, conduct sight-seeing tours, ferry carpoolers to and from work—the potential applications are nearly limitless,” Bigelow writes. “Technicians losing their jobs? Shop owners going out of business? On the contrary, shop owners will need to expand and hire more highly trained technicians to keep pace with the massive increase in demand that will be put on the service industry.”

Parts manufacturers, too, will need to ramp up production in order to keep pace with the skyrocketing demand for brake pads, tires, steering and suspension components and all of the other consumable parts that vehicles require, Bigelow notes.

“In fact, parts manufacturers have already starting gearing up for the changes by offering advanced training and support networks to technicians and facilities that sell or service their products,” he writes in the column. “They also recognize the need to have strong relationships with their wholesalers and suppliers in order to capitalize on the growing market.”

This positive approach is just what the shift to driverless cars requires, Bigelow emphasizes in the conclusion to the piece.

“Naturally, pessimists will continue to point to the potential downsides of the phenomenon,” he writes. “The rest of us can look forward to capitalizing on the new opportunities that always come with one of the basic realities of the automotive industry—rapid change.”

The column is also available online at: <http://www.searchautoparts.com/aftermarket-business/opinion-commentary-distribution/driverless-cars-can-drive-bottom-line-repair-sh>

About Advanced Tire & Auto Center.

[Advanced Tire & Auto Center](#), located on Route 35 in Aberdeen, Twp., N.J., was established by veteran mechanic Jason Bigelow in 1995, who now runs the business with his wife Janet, also a mechanic. Known for its focus on diagnosing and repairing state-of-the-art, 21st-century vehicles, Advanced Tire & Auto Center utilizes 21 factory O.E. diagnostic tools paired with well-trained technicians to perform the same level of service offered by dealerships, but at lower costs. Its comprehensive services also include tire sales and service, wheel alignments, “check engine light” diagnostics, as well as services to corporate and municipal vehicle fleets, body shops and insurance companies.

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