

Tyler Turley is a Littleton, Colorado Firefighter Paramedic who works as an on-site Travel Director for select **Hakins Meetings & Incentives**’ clients.

Turley brings a wealth of corporate group travel experience with him on every client program.



Tyler Turley
Hakins Meetings & Incentives

In addition to his extensive event background, he was employed by Marriott Hotels for 9 years serving in many capacities starting as an airport driver and eventually as a sales and catering manager.

Turley loves the challenge of on-site Travel Director work because the type of service Hakins provides requires him to think on his feet and handle a variety of tasks, many of them on short notice and far from ordinary.

Hakins Meetings & Incentives Insider (HMI)

Hurricane Katrina sounded a familiar alarm for you as a firefighter. You had to respond to the overwhelming need.

Tyler Turley

When Katrina struck, firefighters on Littleton Fire Rescue immediately began to devise a plan to drive down to Mississippi with a pickup truck of aid items and if possible, a boat. Other firefighters offered to work our shifts for us while we were gone. Unfortunately, initially we were told that unless we were with Red Cross, FEMA, or some such organization, we could not go. However, a few days later, FEMA contacted the National Fire Academy and asked for help. The NFA sent a fax to departments across the country asking for 1000 two-person teams to go to Katrina-affected areas. Littleton Fire Rescue was able to provide 3 two-person teams. Once in Waveland, Mississippi we were formed into 8 person teams and were housed at NASA’s Stennis Space Center in a tent city with approximately 50 tents (40 occupants each). Littleton Fire Rescue was very supportive and provided additional equipment for our deployment and support to our families while we were gone.

HMI

How do you triage a disaster of such magnitude?

Tyler Turley

When we arrived in Waveland, it was obvious that food, shelter, and basic medical needs were the highest priority. With a disaster of this scale there are never enough resources. Red Cross was handling a tremendous amount of evacuees, MED-1 from the Carolinas Medical Center provided medical care, and various other organizations provided food, clothing, and other necessities. Almost every baseball field or open lot became a site where an out-of-state church set up a kitchen to provide hot meals, counseling, and a kind word.

***“We can’t forget
about these people.”***

HMI

You're uniquely qualified as a firefighter and a Travel Director to both help organize large groups of people and provide aid.

Tyler Turley

While in Tuscaloosa, Alabama we worked with the Red Cross in the gym at the Skyline Baptist Church. We distributed meals, clothing, and sundries. Red Cross provided nurses for medical evaluations and issued monetary vouchers for immediate cash disbursement. We were there to accomplish web registration of evacuees into the FEMA system. We found that we were able to register people quickly enough so we could break free to help the Church workers loading and unloading trucks. At the end of the day we would empty trash, sweep, and mop the gym. We tried to do whatever we could do to help.

“As is typical with firefighters, we found a way to help that was beyond the norm.”

HMI

On-site with a corporate client you are managing *success* by following the established plan and improvising as events warrant. This operation demanded improvisation.

Tyler Turley

We'd go out in the neighborhoods – delivering prescriptions, patching roofs, cutting fallen trees off of houses, and clearing collapsed structures and debris to allow FEMA housing trailer to be placed on home sites. Improvisation in the fire service is known as *freelancing* and is a cardinal sin. By *freelancing* we were taking a significant risk. If we were to have sustained an injury while working outside our job description, there was no guarantee we'd be covered by insurance and we could have been subject to disciplinary action. The benefit to others far outweighed the risks we took. People looked to us. As is typical with firefighters, we found a way to help that was beyond the norm.

HMI

One painful year has passed for Gulf Coast residents... what needs remain today?

Tyler Turley

Long term rebuilding and financial support continue to be challenges. We can't forget about these people. Lastly, I personally feel we should support the Red Cross; they were nothing short of amazing.