



“NightFlight Expedition” Attraction to Open at Dollywood in 2026 ***Smoky Mountain-Themed Attraction Will Be Largest Investment in Park’s History***

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee (September 17, 2025) – This morning, [Dollywood Parks & Resorts](https://www.dollywood.com) officials announced the largest attraction investment in the history of Dolly Parton’s beloved theme park in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. “[NightFlight Expedition](#),” a more than \$50 million attraction, will open in a sprawling new building in the Wildwood Grove area of the park next spring. (This is the same area where park-goers can find its 2023 award-winning family roller coaster, Big Bear Mountain.)



NightFlight Expedition will be the first attraction experience of its kind in the world, combining four unique features into one groundbreaking thrill ride. Created and built by Dollywood, Herschend Creative Studios and esteemed manufacturer Mack Rides, the custom-designed amphibious ride vehicle will interact with vivid multimedia projections, dynamic onboard and offboard audio, and special lighting effects to immerse guests in an extraordinary Smoky Mountain adventure. Mack Rides recently won the 2025 *Amusement Today* Golden Ticket industry award for Best New Innovation thanks to the ride system used in NightFlight Expedition.

As the world's first indoor family hybrid coaster and whitewater river raft ride, NightFlight Expedition will take guests on an unforgettable journey through the Smoky Mountains to search for bioluminescence in the nation's most-visited national park. During the 5 ½-minute experience, guests will soar on a nighttime flight over the scenic Smokies, enjoy a thrilling whitewater rafting excursion through more than 500,000 gallons of surging water, traverse a mountain ridge on a roller coaster, and navigate a mysterious shimmering lake by boat.

"I'm just so proud that Dollywood has grown so much in its first 40 years that we're able to add a ride like NightFlight Expedition," Dolly Parton shared via video during this morning's announcement. "We're always trying to take the natural beauty of the Smokies and make it part of everything we're doing in the park, and they've definitely been able to do it with this ride.

"A lot of people ask me about my favorite season in the Smokies, but no one ever asks me what my favorite time of day is. Our new ride sends you out into the mountains at night, which is the time that I think they really come to life!"

NightFlight Expedition, which features a 39-inch height requirement, will be located inside a 44,000-square-foot, temperature-controlled facility, allowing it to operate independently of the Smoky Mountain weather.

Current 2025 Dollywood season passholders can purchase a 2026 season pass now – the earliest time ever in the history of the park – and will be given the opportunity to experience NightFlight Expedition before it opens to the public. Non-passholders interested in a 2026 season pass can pre-register now through October 5 at Dollywood.com/NewPass. Pre-sales for those registered will begin on October 13, with season passes on sale to the public on November 1.

For more information about Dollywood, please visit Dollywood.com or download the Dollywood app. For more information about NightFlight Expedition, please visit Dollywood.com/NightFlightExpedition.

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About Dollywood Parks & Resorts

A highly awarded and widely recognized leader in the amusement industry, Dollywood Parks & Resorts – which is celebrating its 40th anniversary season in 2025 – consists of the 165-acre Dollywood theme park; the 35-acre Dollywood's Splash Country; and two award-winning resort properties: Dollywood's DreamMore Resort and Spa and Dollywood's HeartSong Lodge & Resort. As unique as its namesake and owner Dolly Parton, Dollywood is the 2010 Applause Award winner, the theme park industry's highest accolade; winner of 64 Golden Ticket Awards; and recipient of 28 Brass Ring Awards for Live Entertainment. The park is located near Great Smoky Mountains National Park and earned the Golden Ticket Award for the Best Park in the world in 2023. In 2022, 2024 and 2025, Dollywood was named by Tripadvisor as the #1 theme park in the country based on actual guest reviews. It also has been recognized as a top U.S. theme park by USA Today on multiple occasions. Dollywood is open mid-March through early January and offers rides and attractions, shows and

crafters authentic to the East Tennessee region. Dollywood's Splash Country, recognized by the Travel Channel and Tripadvisor as one of the country's most beautiful water parks, operates from mid-May to mid-September. Dollywood's DreamMore Resort and Spa and Dollywood's HeartSong Lodge & Resort provide guests with spectacular mountain views and family-friendly amenities next door to Dollywood theme park and Dollywood's Splash Country. For more information, visit Dollywood.com. Operating days and hours vary.

***Photo Credit: The Dollywood Company.**

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