

Dollywood **NIGHTFLIGHT** EXPEDITION

Dollywood Prepares to Open NightFlight Expedition Tomorrow

Park's Newest Attraction Provides One-of-a-Kind Experience

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee (August 18, 2026) – Last Friday [Dollywood's](#) president, Eugene Naughton, and the park's Dreamer in Chief, Dolly Parton, who joined the event virtually, hosted a ride dedication in anticipation of the opening of [NightFlight Expedition](#). The one-of-a-kind coaster is the newest attraction at Parton's beloved East Tennessee theme park and is set to open to the general public on Wednesday, August 19.

Since the ride was announced last September, many experts have described it as a gamechanger not only for Dollywood but for the entire theme park industry. NightFlight Expedition represents an investment of more than \$60 million, making it the largest single attraction investment in Dollywood's history. It's the park's 11th roller coaster.



“I’m so proud that we’re able to open something like NightFlight Expedition and give families a brand-new way to experience the Smokies together,” Dolly said via video. “Growing up here, I learned to love these mountains in a way that stays with you your whole life. This ride truly is an

adventure that lets you see the mountains the way I always remember them, full of wonder and beauty.”

With four different experiences comprising one coaster, Dollywood’s NightFlight Expedition adds to the park’s roster of industry-leading ride innovations. The immersive indoor adventure coaster takes guests soaring on a nighttime flight over the scenic Smokies, plunging into a daring whitewater rafting excursion through more than 500,000 gallons of surging water, climbing up and over a mountain ridge, and splashing into a shimmering Smoky Mountain lake.

NightFlight Expedition continues Dollywood’s long history of rich storytelling, beginning with a highly detailed queue line experience that introduces Cora and Jasper Oakley, the niece and nephew of Ned Oakley, a character who became the face of Big Bear Mountain family coaster in 2023. Created and built by Dollywood, Herschend Creative Studios and esteemed manufacturer Mack Rides, NightFlight Expedition’s custom-designed ride vehicle interacts with vivid multimedia projections, dynamic onboard and offboard audio, and special lighting effects, drawing guests into an extraordinary Smoky Mountain adventure.

NightFlight Expedition, which features a 39-inch height requirement, is located inside a 44,000-square-foot, temperature-controlled facility, allowing it to operate independently of the Smoky Mountain weather. The coaster is the newest addition to the park’s Wildwood Grove area, which consistently has won industry awards for being the best theme park kids’ area since it opened in 2019. At the heart of the ride’s nearly five-and-a-half minute adventure is the search for “Secret Lake,” the water source thought to provide Wildwood Grove’s Wildwood Tree with its colorful glowing canopy.



During the ride, guests set out on their expedition to find Secret Lake with the help of twin scientists Cora and Jasper. The twins have invented the “Bioluminator,” a device designed to detect and amplify bioluminescence, which is the biochemical emission of light by living organisms found naturally in the Great Smoky Mountains. Cora and Jasper mount the device onto their one-of-a-kind Smoky Mountain Tracker Vehicle to illuminate the Wildwood Tree’s glowing roots and follow them to Secret Lake.

[Dollywood Resorts](#) are also offering exclusive NightFlight Expedition experiences and packages. Guests at both [Dollywood’s HeartSong Lodge & Resort](#) and [Dollywood’s DreamMore Resort and Spa](#) can enjoy NightFlight Expedition décor; photo opportunities; themed activities at Camp DW; a special in-room video message from Cora and Jasper; food and beverage offerings; and overnight packages that included in-room ride décor, themed merchandise, baked goods and admission to Dollywood. The NightFlight Expedition VIP Experience also includes a VIP Tour of Dollywood with a ride on NightFlight Expedition. [Packages](#) are available for stays at each resort from August 21 through October 31, 2026, and are subject to availability.

Now through September 13, Dollywood theme park’s hours are extended from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., allowing guests more time to enjoy NightFlight Expedition and the fun of Dollywood’s world-class rides and attractions.

For more information about NightFlight Expedition and Dollywood’s 2026 season, please visit [Dollywood.com](#).

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About Dollywood Parks & Resorts

A highly awarded and widely recognized leader in the amusement industry, Dollywood Parks & Resorts 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 opened in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, on May 3, 1986, and earned the theme park industry’s highest accolade, the Applause Award, in 2010. Dollywood has earned 67 Golden Ticket Awards and 28 Brass Ring Awards for live entertainment. In 2022, 2024 and 2025, Dollywood was named by Tripadvisor as the #1 theme park in the country based on actual guest reviews. The park is located near Great Smoky Mountains National Park and 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, attractions, shows and crafters inspired by and 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 as well as 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.

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