

Toledo Zoo Celebrates 40 Years of Holiday Magic with Lights Before Christmas and Spectacular Drone Show

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Toledo Zoo](#) is proud to celebrate the 40th edition of its beloved Lights Before Christmas, presented by [Huntington Bank](#) — returning this holiday season with more sparkle, tradition and community spirit than ever before.

Running from Nov. 21 to Dec. 31, this year's milestone celebration will dazzle visitors with over a million glittering lights, animated displays, festive activities and family fun. Building on the excitement of the recently announced 400-drone shows, the Zoo's 40th year of Lights promises unforgettable moments — from the breathtaking Tree Lighting Ceremony to a spectacular nighttime finale in the sky.

The Nov. 21 Tree Lighting Ceremony will officially kick off six weeks of holiday magic at the Toledo Zoo. The first 1,000 visitors to Lights Before Christmas presented by Huntington Bank on Friday, Nov. 21, will have the chance to receive an exclusive commemorative t-shirt. The giveaway begins at 3 p.m. and will be available while supplies last at staffed tables located in Blade Plaza.



TOLEDO ZOO & AQUARIUM
P.O. BOX 140130 • TOLEDO, OHIO • 43614-0130 • 419-385-5721

HONORING OUR PAST. ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE.

Guests are then invited to gather near the Formal Gardens at 6 p.m. to watch as the Zoo's iconic 85-foot Norway spruce comes to life in a dazzling display of color and light. The evening will also feature the highly anticipated drone shows, illuminating the night sky with 400 synchronized drones at approximately 6 p.m. and again at 8:30 p.m.

Throughout the season, visitors can explore the full Lights Before Christmas experience, featuring over one million twinkling lights, more than 200 illuminated animal images and the lively Main Plaza Dancing Lights sponsored by Comfortline Fiber Frame (<https://www.fiberframe.com>). Guests can savor seasonal treats and warm beverages throughout the Zoo as they stroll among the enchanting displays and celebrate this cherished Toledo tradition.

For nearly four decades, Lights Before Christmas presented by Huntington Bank has been a cornerstone of the holiday season for generations of families. After securing the title of one of USA TODAY's Top 10 Best Zoo Lights (<https://10best.usatoday.com>) in recent years, the Zoo is excited to offer a fresh season of cherished traditions and new delights. Guests are encouraged to vote for Toledo Zoo on 10best.com (<https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/best-zoo-lights>).

This year's event includes the return of the reimagined Winter Village sponsored by Kroger (<https://www.kroger.com>) in the historic Amphitheatre. Visitors can ride down the ice slide, cozy up at fire pits with a festive drink from Twinkle Tavern, explore seasonal treasures at Enchanted Gifts and enjoy holiday treats at The Sweet Shoppe. Santa will be available for photos and visits in the Winter Village from 4 – 8 p.m. daily, Nov. 21 through Dec. 31.

The Toledo Zoo is also proud to introduce Zoo for All Nights at the Lights (<https://www.toledozoo.org/events/nights-at-the-lights>) presented by Mercy Health (<https://www.mercy.com>). As part of the Conda Family Zoo for All Program (<https://www.toledozoo.org/donate/conda-family-zoo-for-all>), these nights offer optional accommodations to best fit individual needs.

These nights are included with Lights admission on Tuesday, Nov. 25 and Tuesday, Dec. 9, from 3 – 8 p.m. and are part of the Zoo's ongoing commitment to removing barriers and creating a more accessible, welcoming experience for every member of the community.

Highlights include:

- A quiet sensory area in the Relic Room on the lower level of the ProMedica Museum of Natural History.
- A sensory-friendly digital map with a recommended low-stimulation route and clearly marked headphone zones.
- Sensory signage is placed at most building entrances.
- Sensory bags are available to borrow at the Visitor Services Building and Broadway Ticket Booths.
- Disposable earplugs are available at all ticket booths upon request.

- Communication cards and a social narrative are available online to help guests plan their visit.
- Staff and Santa are trained in disability etiquette to create a welcoming, inclusive experience for all visitors.

During the season, the Zoo will open exclusively for Lights Before Christmas starting at 3 p.m.

Monday – Thursday: 3 – 8 p.m. (Zoo closes at 9 p.m.)

Friday – Sunday: 3 – 9 p.m. (Zoo closes at 10 p.m.)

Thanksgiving Day: 3 – 8 p.m. (Zoo closes at 9 p.m.)

Christmas Eve: 3 – 8 p.m. (Zoo closes at 9 p.m.)

Christmas Day: 3 – 8 p.m. (Zoo closes at 9 p.m.)

New Year's Eve: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Zoo closes at 9 p.m.)

Reservations are now open and are required for all guests, including members. Reservations are released one week at a time. Tickets can be purchased online at

<https://www.toledozoo.org/events/lights>.

2025 Toledo Zoo Lights Before Christmas Special Events:

Brewdolph Bash

Nov. 20 | 21+ Event

Join us for a festive kickoff with exclusive access to the Lights Before Christmas displays, craft beverages and seasonal treats.

<https://toledozoo.org/events/brewdolph-bash>

Polar Paws & Santa Claws 5K Run/Walk

Dec. 14

Bundle up and join us for this festive run or walk event.

<https://toledozoo.org/events/polar-paws>

Noon Year's Eve

Dec. 31

Celebrate the New Year with a family-friendly countdown at noon.

<https://toledozoo.org/events/noon-years-eve>

Rides and Activities:

Ice Slide – \$3.50 per ride

Carousel – \$3.50 per ride

Ice Carving Demos – Thursdays in December, 6 p.m. (Main Plaza)

Reindeer Encounter – Included with Zoo admission

Holly Jolly Express – \$3.50 per ride (Fri–Sun, weather permitting)

Swanton Area Railroad and Model Club – 5 p.m. daily in Nature's Neighborhood (closed Christmas Eve & Christmas Day)

Special ride bundles are available for a discounted rate.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit <https://www.toledozoo.org/events/lights>.

Event photos can be found [here](#). Please credit Toledo Zoo & Aquarium where applicable.

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About the Toledo Zoo

The Toledo Zoo & Aquarium, situated in Toledo, Ohio, proudly holds membership in the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums and accreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Boasting a diverse collection, the Toledo Zoo & Aquarium is home to more than 16,000 individual animals spanning 680+ species. Actively engaged in conservation efforts, the Zoo participates in over 80 species survival programs. With a robust community of over 78,000 active membership households, the Toledo Zoo & Aquarium welcomes about 1.1 million visitors annually.

About "Honoring our past. Envisioning our future."

"Honoring our past. Envisioning our future." is the 125th-anniversary campaign for the Toledo Zoo, commemorating 125 years of conservation, education and community connection. Since its inception in 1900, the Toledo Zoo has grown from a modest collection of animals into a world-renowned zoological institution.

Throughout the 2025 calendar year, the Toledo Zoo will host a series of special events, exhibits, and programs to honor this remarkable milestone. These celebrations will highlight the Zoo's historic achievements, ongoing conservation efforts and ambitious plans for the future. Visitors can look forward to engaging experiences that connect them to the Zoo's mission of inspiring people to care about wildlife and natural environments.

Join us in 2025 to celebrate this extraordinary milestone and help shape the next chapter of the Toledo Zoo's incredible legacy.

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Jen Brassil

Director of PR & Communications Events

jennifer.brassil@toledozoo.org

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