The wreckage of an 18th century sailing vessel discovered off the Louisiana coast has yielded up a quantity of gold bullion and silver, Governor David Treen revealed today.

Speaking at a press conference in the Berwick shipyard where the artifacts discovered in the wreck are being temporarily stored, Treen said divers have returned nearly 40 pounds of virtually pure gold and over 30 pounds of silver.

Some 5 tons of copper have also been brought to the surface, Treen added.

The Governor said that it is not known at this time if additional precious metal was aboard the vessel when it sank one and a half miles off the Louisiana Coast near what is now the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge.

The exact date of the sinking has not yet been pinpointed, but is believed to be in the middle third of the 1700's, Treen added.

The press conference was called to display the artifacts found to date, including a nine-foot cannon and a ten-foot anchor, as well as hides, ceramics and other artifacts.

All of the material, except the gold and silver must be kept submerged in water to prevent deterioration.

The gold was brought to the site by the State Police from the vault where it is being stored.

The Governor said the information on the discovery of precious metal aboard the wreck was not made public until today's press conference because adequate security of the wreck was only completed in the last day or so.

Middle 18th century Spanish merchant vessel found 1 1/2 miles offshore of Rockefeller Refuge in Cameron Parish.

- Discovered in 15-18 feet of water
- Mostly covered by a thin layer of Beaumont clay and shell
- Visibility of water at wreck is 8'
- Wreck site is 200' x 120'

Found by accident by shrimper Curtis Blume of Port Bolivar, Texas, who brought up the first batch of artifacts with his trawl net. Shrimp boat named Lady Barbara.

Actual excavation is expected to start within two weeks and will last at least four to six months.

Objects uncovered to date:
- Cured turtle shells for European haircombs
- Rouge used for make-up
- Parts of figures and other ceramic Aztec wares
- Leather hides
- Olive jars
- Several cannons (9 feet x 2 feet)
- An anchor (10 feet)
- Copper artifacts
- 38 lbs of gold (3 to 9 lb., discs)
- 30 lbs. of silver in discs
- 5 tons of copper

By contractual agreement the bulk of the excavation costs is to be borne by Free Enterprise Salvage of Berwick under the technical direction of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

The contract (percentage based on State of Florida precedent) calls for excavation to include complete stabilization and protection of the site along with the production and utilization of both vertical and horizontal control on the excavation process.

Free Enterprise Salvage owned by:
- Curtis Blume of Port Bolivar, Texas, shrimper and diver.
- Stephen L. Smith, a Cameron shrimper and diver.
- John D. Bailey, a Lake Charles businessman.
- Select Services, Inc. of Berwick owned by Doyle Berry and Everett Berry of Berry Brothers Construction Company.

State technical direction provided by:
- Coastal Environments, Inc.
- Woody Gagliano, Charles Pierson (project management, geology, history, historic archeology and marine archeology).
- Southern Archaeological Research, Inc., Bill Spencer (underwater archaeologist)
- Archaeological Research Service, Allen Saltus, (underwater archaeologist)