More than 80 events are scheduled and run through Oct. 6.

BATON ROUGE (AP) - Ancient weapons and tools. Ceremonial Indian mounds. Plantation slave quarters. Sunken ships. They all hold a fascination for archaeologists, who are charged not just with unlocking secrets of the past, but with preserving them for future generations.

Those same archaeologists will be busy this week, through Oct. 6, for Louisiana Archaeology Week.

More than 80 events are scheduled for this 14th annual event, which is sponsored by the Division of Archaeology in the Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

"Ten years ago, we didn't know that there were Indian mounds in Louisiana that dated to 4,000 B.C.," said state archaeologist Tom Eubanks. "It's a good example of how we are constantly learning from research."

In fact, Eubanks said, the Division of Archaeology reviews more than 3,000 development projects each year. The department's expertise is often needed when a new subdivision is planned, when a home or building becomes a state historic site and even when cell phone towers are installed.

Rosedown Plantation in St. Francisville is a good example. This fall, archaeologists will survey and study the site, hoping to gather details of Rosedown's history, but with an emphasis on the lives of the slaves who once lived there. In the months to come, tour guides at the plantation will relate information that has been gathered and verified by archaeologists.

In recent years, archaeologists have shone a spotlight on long-silent places that might never have given up their secrets if not for these scientists' skill and expertise.

Some hot spots have included prehistoric Indian mounds at Poverty Point, Watson Brake and Marksville. Archaeologists learned that Louisiana features some of the oldest and best-preserved Indian mounds in the world, many which are older than Stonehenge in England or the pyramids of Egypt.

El Nuevo Constante, the ship that ran aground near Cameron Parish in 1766 is another hot spot. Headed for Spain, it was struck by high winds and a heavy storm that eventually sank the vessel. Archaeologists have discovered not just important pieces of the ship, but many personal effects belonging to the passengers.

There's also Angola Plantation. Stephanie Perrault and her company, Coastal Environments, Inc., were commissioned to do excavation work near Louisiana's most famous prison, and soon discovered the foundation of Angola Plantation, which until 1927, had housed many of the prison's officers. They retrieved everything from buttons and hairpins to a pair of Civil War uniform epaulets.

Dennis Jones of Surveys Unlimited Research Associates conducted a dig last year of Camp Avondale, a hot spot which is home to a prehistoric Indian mound. Many of the clay and pottery fragments he recovered point to the ingenuity of prehistoric woman.

The design of their cooking tools shows an understanding of heat distribution and the reaction of fire with certain building materials.

In the summer of 2000, archaeologists from the University of Alabama traveled to Avery Island to conduct a dig at the famous Tabasco hot pepper sauce factory, which was built in the late 1800s and razed in 1928. They found shell casings, the bowl of an 18th-century clay pipe, old bottles and several undated fossils.

In the near future, archaeologists hope to complete a Louisiana trail linking several new sites of interest and develop a marker system to identify them appropriately, Eubanks said.

A site is eligible to be considered for status on the National Register of Historic Places (and therefore have archaeological significance) at the age of 50 years.