

# Mission tours highlight archaeology



By **Sky Sandifer**  
DEMOCRAT WRITER

For those with a passion for Tallahassee's early history, Mission San Luis is offering special tours for the rest of the month in celebration of Florida Archaeology Month.

The tours are at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. today and next Tuesday and Wednesday, and at 10 a.m. Sunday at the historic site on West Tennessee Street. All tours are free with admission (\$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors, \$2 for children (6-17), and free for children under age 6 and for members of the military).

Mission San Luis is a recreated community equipped with museums and significant artifacts that display life in Florida centuries ago.

Jerry Lee, senior archaeologist at Mission San Luis, has been working at the site for 20 years. He said the tours give people an inside look into what archaeologists take pride in doing. The tours are hands on; people can touch and feel the materials.

"We show collections and share findings of how we see things," he said. "This tour gives a different perspective. We hope people will get an appreciation for the history."

Janelle Willingham, visitor services manager at Mission San Luis, said the turnout for the tours has been successful thus far. She said as many as 12 people can come every tour.

"This has been very positive and people have had lots of interest," she said. "We've had very good turnouts."

Archaeologist Heidi Edgar checks on some specimens in the San Luis lab. Archaeology lab tours are held at San Luis at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. during the month of March. This tour offers behind the scenes tour of the archaeology lab. Artifacts are categorized, labeled and cleaned for display. It's an often tedious task that has to be done carefully and slowly. Many of the more stellar artifacts that have been found at San Luis are on display in the welcome center.

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At right, Edgar shows visitors how rust is removed from metal artifacts by the use of electrolysis. The process can take up to two years to completely remove layers of rust.



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