Club Secretary Ken Benson trims roses at the entrance into Gladstone, Michigan. With help from the city and a bank, the Kiwanis club and its Key Club maintain the floral welcome to their picturesque community.

Welcome to Gladstone

FINDING THIS UPPER PENINSULA COMMUNITY ISN'T DIFFICULT. JUST TURN IN WHEN YOU SEE ALL THOSE KIWANIS FLOWERS. | Story by Dick Isenhour

The City of Gladstone, Michigan's website invites visitors with beautiful shoreline and park scenes. "We have the small town quality and hospitality," the home page declares.

The first thing highway travelers notice as they arrive in Gladstone, however, are roses … lots and lots of roses.

More than a decade ago, the Kiwanis Club of Gladstone planted roses at the city's entrance, and it's been a source of Kiwanis service and pride ever since.

"They found that two varieties — William Baffin and the Henry Kelsey — do very well in this climate," says Secretary Ken Benson.

With the help of city equipment, members planted rose bushes on both sides of the city entrance. First Bank, which is located at the site, made a sizable contribution to purchase the flowers and an irrigation system.

"We maintain, prune, replant, spray, weed and irrigate all 104 bushes throughout the year," Benson says, adding that Key Club members often join the work crews.

"Kiwanis and the city always have had a special relationship," he says. "Together, we've completed two playgrounds and tennis courts. We're currently converting a large wetland area into an outdoor nature preserve classroom."

Another gem to add to the city's website, no doubt.