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## **Rally demands more cops**

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A number of uniformed police officers, including two on horseback, joined in a rally designed to put pressure on council members before a key budget meeting Wednesday.

"We're hoping to increase our numbers; we want 125 [additional] cops by 2009," said David Titus, president of the federation. The police force now has 571 sworn officers, and city officials have been debating whether to increase taxes to hire up to 25 more.

Saturday's rally, outside the Klub Hause restaurant at 1079 Rice St., drew about 75 to 100 people. A similar rally on St. Paul's East Side drew about 150 people on Aug. 16.

But Mick Kieffer, one of the organizers, said there's growing concern about violence in St. Paul neighborhoods. "Politicians are either going to step up to the plate or they won't have a plate to step up to next year," he said. He and others have called on the city to hire 200 new officers.

Tom Walsh, a spokesman for Police Chief John M. Harrington, said St. Paul has about the same number of police officers as it did in 1970, even though calls to police "have increased really dramatically." He said the chief supports the union's call for 125 new hires. But realistically, Walsh said, the chances are "pretty remote."

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