

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Postal Service says it is considering cutting mail delivery to three days a week.

J. T. Ellington, a senior assistant postmaster general, said in an interview Thursday that three-day-per-week delivery is "one of the options" the financially troubled agency is considering in its campaign to cut costs.

Although more drastic cutbacks have been discussed, Ellington said, "OUR MOST IMMEDIATE option is reduction by one day in delivery service." Postal officials had said previously they are considering eliminating delivery on Saturday or one other day of the week.

Postal service officials have said the savings from elimination of delivery on

Saturday would be about \$350 million per year and savings would be somewhat higher if delivery is dropped on a business day.

Ellington said the possibility of three-day-per-week delivery was discussed at a recent meeting of the agency's board of governors.

"We'll have to see how things go in

the financial area and then decide what we have to do," he said.

Other service cutbacks under consideration include ending special delivery, postal officials say.

"We are not excluding anything from consideration," Ellington said.

The Postal Service would have to seek the approval of the Postal Rate

Commission, an independent agency, before eliminating any service.

The postal deficit is estimated to reach a record \$1.5 billion for the fiscal year ending June 30.

One problem the Postal Service faces is that "everywhere we turn on cutting costs, somebody opposes it," Ellington said.

In one such action Thursday, a federal judge blocked the Postal Service from closing rural post offices to save money.

U.S. District Judge John Lewis Smith issued a temporary injunction order against the economy plan scheduled a hearing for March 3 on whether to make his order permanent.